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U. S. Army Military History Institute

Planning for War:

A History of the General Board of the Navy, 1900-1914

A Thesis

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Daniel Joseph Costello

Commander, United States Navy

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T233170

VITA

Daniel Joseph Costello

Commander, United States Navy

Born: Derby, Connecticut, March 19, 1929

Education: Private and Public schools, Essex County, Massachusetts

Holy Cross College, 1946-1950

Fletcher School, 1961-1963

Degrees: B.S., Holy Cross College, 1950

M.A., Fletcher School, 1962

M.A.L.D., Fletcher School, 1963

Commander Costello was commissioned in the Navy in 1950 and has served in battleships, cruisers, aircraft carriers, destroyers, minesweepers, and submarines. He has recently completed an assignment as Aide and Administrative Assistant to the Commandant of the United States Marine Corps.

ABSTRACT

Secretary of the Navy John D. Long's authorization of the General Board in March of 1900 marked a significant shift in naval administrative practice as it applied to war planning. The Board, composed of some of the Navy's most capable officers, advised the Secretary with respect to America's probable enemies, the manner in which future conflicts should be fought, and the best way to prepare for them from a naval point of view. Until that time, the civilian chiefs of the Navy did not have a formal system of counsel on the overall needs of the service in the area of war plans and war preparations.

This dissertation is a study of the General Board from the 1900 to 1914 period. It analyzes the Board's origins and describes its organization, operation, and relationship with other Navy Department components. Also examined are the Board's estimates as to the "threats" to U.S. security, and its proposals relative to naval bases, ship strength, and the strategical disposition of the fleet.

The primary source materials used consisted of the rather extensive official files of the General Board maintained at the Office of Naval History in Washington, D.C. and the archives of the Naval War

College deposited at Newport, R.I. and Mechanicsburg, Pa. They were supplemented by the substantial number of personal papers of naval officers who were either directly or indirectly connected with the General Board.

The Board grew out of a movement which began at the Naval War College in the late 1880's and early 1890's and which was led by Rear Admiral Henry C. Taylor. The objective was to make war planning a full time activity so as to better prepare the Navy for war. The formation of the General Board, while a progressive step, fell short of Taylor's goals because of Secretary Long's fear that excessive power in the hands of the war planners would lessen his control and dissatisfy the firmly entrenched bureau chiefs. Long's decision to establish the Board was based in large part on the need to assign Admiral George Dewey to a position of prestige. He became President of the new organization and remained its principal officer for seventeen years.

Although Dewey was the nominal head, Rear Admiral Taylor dominated the Board's early years. Despite continual resistance from the bureau chiefs, he proved the Board's usefulness and markedly increased the effectiveness of the Navy's war planning. However, Taylor failed in his efforts to develop the Board into a more authoritative organ with powers akin to those of the bureaus. So strong was the opposition within the bureaus and Congress to the new approach to war

planning, that Taylor found it impossible to even achieve legislative recognition of the Board as a permanent part of the Navy's administrative structure.

The problem of defining the Board's role in the Navy Department continued after Taylor's death in 1904, but took on a new perspective when line officer extremists, discouraged by Dewey's disinterest in their cause, abandoned Taylor's evolutionary approach, advocated the disestablishment of the General Board, and the creation of a full-fledged general staff with authoritative direction over the bureaus. Some of them suggested the desirability of doing away with the Secretary of the Navy and indicated that they would not be satisfied until they had a system which would automatically prepare the United States for war. The evidence indicates that these radicals had little if any appreciation for the problems of military planning in a democratic environment. Their entire philosophy suggested that they would not be content with anything short of a militarist government.

Throughout most of the period under examination, the Board found that its programs suffered because of poor secretarial stability. The position of Secretary of the Navy was too often used as a way station for other positions in government, or as a reward for distinguished service elsewhere. Too few of the Secretaries remained in their posts long enough to understand the complexities of war planning, or to be able to restrain the independent bureau chiefs. A notable exception

was George von L. Meyer, who remained in office from 1909 to 1913 and established a system which ensured that approved recommendations of the Board would be implemented by the bureaus.

Board war plans were predicated on the estimate that American security could be challenged by Germany in the Atlantic or Japan in the Pacific, but not by both powers at the same time. Germany was identified as a probable enemy by most naval officers even before the Board was organized, and it continued in that status throughout the time frame of this study. The prospect of war with Japan was not seriously considered by the planners until after the schools "crisis" with Japan arose in 1906.

German ambitions were thought to lie principally in the Caribbean area, and it was here that the Board felt the decisive sea battles would take place. Japan's major objective was to wrest the Philippines from U.S. control. Board members were not sanguine about the outcome of either conflict, but had more confidence in the American Navy's ability to counter any German moves in the Caribbean. On the other hand United States' weakness in the Pacific prompted the Board to conclude that the best reaction to Japanese aggression would be to abandon the Philippines, withdraw to Hawaii, and await reinforcements from the Atlantic before engaging the Japanese fleet.

The Board's naval base policy was restrained, reasonable, and consistent with the expanded territorial responsibilities brought about

as a result of the Spanish-American War. However, it failed to find favor in Congress and went largely unimplemented, because it required the expenditure of large sums in areas which did not directly benefit home constituencies.

The Board's shipbuilding programs were also unsuccessful. They were based on the objective of achieving, in a specific period of time, the construction of 48 battleships and a proportionate number of other vessels. While this approach ensured numerical consistency, it incorrectly assumed that the factors bearing on ultimate fleet strength, such as German and Japanese building policies, would also remain constant. In addition, it ignored the impracticability of achieving governmental approval of specific long range programs in the light of the congressional practice of appropriating funds on an annual basis. The Board's shipbuilding programs failed in other aspects as well. Its annual proposals were generally halved by Congress and perhaps more significantly, altered to the extent that the desired balance between battleships and other class vessels was never achieved.

While the Board was never satisfied with the growth of the American fleet, it was able to transform the ships which the Navy possessed from isolated and untrained units of power into fleets capable of conducting complex multi-ship operations. The result was a more responsive and professional Navy, far better equipped than ever before to deal with prospective enemies.

The debate which took place within the Board and elsewhere over the proper disposition of American naval forces revealed that a wide gap separated naval responsibilities and capabilities in the 1900 to 1914 period. The Navy was simply not prepared, from the standpoint of bases and ships, to discharge all of the duties which the General Board anticipated for it within the context of a two-ocean threat and world-wide territorial possessions and interests.

A Chantal

Sans elle, ceci

n'aurait pas été possible.

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PREFACE

In 1968 there are thousands of American naval officers in the United States and elsewhere throughout the world whose primary function is to plan for future wars. Every large naval staff has a war plans section which addresses itself to a vast range of possible contingencies and tries to ensure that naval forces will be ready to respond to them. In short, war planning is a fully institutionalized endeavor in the United States Navy and the other military services.

This practice of treating war planning as a highly specialized function is a fairly recent development. The Navy had been in existence for well over a century before it had an organization whose primary purpose was to advise the Secretary of the Navy with respect to America's probable enemies, the manner in which future conflicts should be fought, and the best way to prepare for them from a naval point of view. The turning point came in March of 1900 when Secretary of the Navy John D. Long established the General Board as the Navy's first war planning agency.

The purpose of this study is to shed some light on the origins, evolution, and inner workings of the General Board from its inception

in 1900 until the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914. In addition, it seeks to describe and analyze the Board's opinions as to the challenges which faced American security, and how it thought the Navy should be prepared to respond to them.

The official files of the General Board, maintained in excellent condition in the Navy's Operational Archives in Washington, D.C., provide the bulk of the primary source material. I am indebted to Rear Admiral Ernest M. Eller, Director of Naval History, for permitting free access to these files. I am also deeply appreciative of the guidance and administrative support liberally offered by Dr. Dean C. Allard, Head of the Navy's Operational Archives and custodian of the General Board records. Without the willing cooperation of Dr. Allard and his capable staff this study would have been much less pleasurable and far more difficult. In particular, I would like to thank Miss Barbara Gilmore, Mrs. Mildred D. Mayeux, Mr. Bernard Cavalcante, and Miss Sandra J. Brown, all assigned to the Archives Branch of the Office of Naval History.

Because of the close ties which existed between the General Board and the Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island, the archives of the College were consulted and found to be extremely valuable. A speedy course was steered through these records because of the knowledgeable assistance of Mr. John DiNapoli, Director of Libraries at the War College, and his assistant, Mrs. Lucille Rotchfort. A substantial amount of War College material was located at the Federal

Records Center in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, and I am appreciative of the aid given me there by Mr. R. J. Williard, Chief Reference Service Branch, and Mr. Edward Guarna, his able assistant.

Most of the official government documents and secondary source material used in this study were made available on long term loan through the kindness of Mr. Walter B. Greenwood of the Navy Department Library. He and his highly qualified staff manage one of the richest collections of books and documents pertaining to naval subjects.

Portions of this study have been read by Dr. Dean Allard, Dr. Mary Klachko, Miss Mary Loughlin, Mr. Bernard Cavalcante, and Mr. James Stewart, and I am grateful for their constructive comments. Dr. Klachko, now in the process of writing a definitive biography of the Navy's first Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral William S. Benson, has demonstrated that a clear understanding of naval matters can be achieved by members of a sex who do not ordinarily go down to sea in ships.

Finally, and with disproportionate brevity, I would like to thank Professor Ruhl J. Bartlett of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. His wise counsel benefited me greatly, not only in this effort but during the two years I studied under him at the Fletcher School.

While I owe much to the many who have helped me in this endeavor, I accept full responsibility for its accuracy and contents. Whatever shortcomings exist are mine and mine alone.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On March 13, 1900, Secretary of the Navy John Davis Long signed General Order number 544 creating the General Board. The simple act of affixing his signature to this paper was derivative of a new outlook on the problem of preparing for naval warfare and marked a milestone in a long campaign by a few naval officers to organize the Navy to plan for war during times of peace. The Federal Navy, created in 1798, had seen five wars and several crises and yet never had, as part of its regular administrative machinery, an agency devoted to the function of war planning. The old system assumed there would be adequate time to prepare, and to lay the plans after a war had begun. Why then in 1900, less than two years after an apparently glorious and successful trial under fire in the Spanish War did Long see fit to depart from the practice of the past 100 years? The answer is a complex one, involving technological growth of naval armaments, the determination of a few naval officers to recast the Navy, acquire for it a larger role in the national life, and improve its performance in war and under the threat of war.

The conflicts of the nineteenth century which most involved the Navy were the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Civil War, and the Spanish-American War. In 1812 all of the direction of the Navy was concentrated in the Office of the Secretary of the Navy. There was no plan for war and few instruments with which to execute a plan if one had been available.[1] When war with Great Britain became imminent, Secretary Paul Hamilton sought professional advice as to the best means of employing the small navy then available. The response was dissonant: Commodore John Rodgers favored concentration of naval strength to force England to keep her ships together and thus minimize commerce raiding operations; Commodore Stephen Decatur advocated dispersion. There was no scheme for the consistent conduct of the war, and it is doubtful whether one could have been developed by the Secretary, encumbered as he was by the divergent views of such distinguished naval officers.[2] There was no fleet organization; ship captains operated directly under the orders of the Secretary of the Navy. The experience of the war demonstrated the danger of improvisation and the merit of advance preparation.[3]

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1. Charles O. Paullin, "Naval Administration Under Secretaries of the Navy Smith, Hamilton, and Jones, 1801-1814," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 32 (December, 1906), p. 1317.
2. Rear Admiral Charles S. Sperry to Rear Admiral Henry C. Taylor, February 24, 1904, Naval War College Archives, Newport, R.I.; Harold and Margaret Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939), p. 77.
3. Sprout, Rise of American Naval Power, p. 83.

As a result, the system of naval administration was changed in 1815 to provide for professional counsel to the Secretary in the form of the Board of Naval Commissioners. The Commissioners were to be charged, among other things, with the employment of ships.[4] But this important duty was almost immediately removed from its cognizance by Secretary of the Navy Benjamin W. Crowninshield, and its responsibilities became almost exclusively civil in character.[5] How the Navy Commissioners would have responded to the administrative challenge of war is uncertain, for the Navy remained untested during the entire period of their existence. The Commissioners continued in power until 1842 when the growing complexity of a navy making the transition from sail to steam, and the inability of the Commissioners or the Office of the Secretary to manage the burgeoning detail associated with naval administration, prompted Secretary Abel Upshur to recommend to Congress the overhaul of the Navy's organization and the establishment of several functional bureaus to administer naval affairs. Significantly, none assumed cognizance over the employment of ships and preparation for war, and the Secretary remained the only coordinator of the individual bureaus.[6] The Bureau

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4. Charles O. Paullin, "Naval Administration Under the Navy Commissioners, 1815-1842," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 33 (June, 1907), p. 610.
5. Ibid., pp. 610-611.
6. Charles O. Paullin, "Naval Administration, 1842-1861," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 33 (December, 1907), p. 1440.

System was oriented to manage the business of the construction of ships, supplies, health, ordnance, and shipyards but not the business of war. Additionally, the law establishing the bureaus contained no provision for their cooperation. The effective control of these independent entities demanded a dominant and knowledgeable Secretary. "It was supposed," Secretary of the Navy William C. Whitney remarked, "that the bureau chiefs would be able to sit in consultation with the Secretary and that the department would not lack intelligent guidance."[7] However, Whitney found that the bureau chiefs were so busy conducting the routine of their offices that they were not able to counsel the Secretary on matters affecting the Navy as a whole.[8]

Others like Alfred Thayer Mahan were not so charitable. He called the bureau heads "advocates" of their specialties but not "advisers" to the Secretary.[9] He criticized the bureaus for not representing the thinking of the line officers of the Navy and, instead, adopting the parochial view of the staff corps.[10] Another line officer, Richard Wainwright, reported to a colleague that "war is the last thing that worries the mind of a bureau chief" and that "each bureau is its

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7. U.S., Department of the Navy, Report of the Secretary of the Navy, 1885, (Washington, 1885), p. XXXVIII.
8. Ibid., p. XXXIX.
9. Alfred T. Mahan, Naval Administration and Warfare, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1908), p. 63.
10. William D. Puleston, Mahan: The Life and Work of Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939), pp. 240-241.

own critic and prepares a defense in place of looking for a remedy."[11] Many Congressmen enjoyed working with the bureaus. It simplified the quest for "pork barrel." A Congressman like Ernest Roberts could go to Rear Admiral Charles O'Neil, Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, and ask him to include in his appropriations estimates, a naval magazine in the home district and also "to impress the matter upon the Secretary [so that] he can be induced to follow up [the] recommendation with another equally strong."[12] Other Congressmen looked on the Navy Department "not as a unit but as several pieces - like a federation of states loosely held together."[13] A less partial and more recent commentator, in a survey of naval administration in the nineteenth century found that:

> the Navy suffered on the one hand from overpowerful bureaus, each jealously guarding its respective prerogatives, unwilling to yield authority to secure coordination, professionally arrogant, and unmindful of the needs as such; and on the other hand from the correlative vice of the Secretaries whose talents were at times deficient and whose office was inadequately staffed to enable them to exercise the powers of control that were nominally those of the Secretary of the Navy.[14]

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11. Richard Wainwright to Lieutenant Commander William S. Sims, June 20, 1904, Sims Papers, Division of Naval History, Navy Department, Washington, D. C.; hereafter referred to as the Sims Papers.
12. Roberts to O'Neil, August 22, 1902, Rear Admiral Charles O'Neil Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
13. Rear Admiral Henry C. Taylor to Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce, April 8, 1902, Luce Papers, Library of Congress.
14. Leonard D. White, The Republican Era, 1869-1901, (New York: Macmillian Co., 1958), p. 162.

The first test of the bureaus' wartime responsiveness came during hostilities with Mexico, and as one historian notes, they were "unequal to the task before them." While the sea captains performed creditably, it was in spite of and not because of the support which they received from Washington.[15] This may have been the reason why Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles decided at the very beginning of the Civil War to effect changes in the Navy's organization thus making it more responsive to war's demands. The Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy was established and filled by an ex-naval officer, Gustavus V. Fox. It was his responsibility to ensure that the bureaus worked together as a team in providing logistics support to the forces afloat. Welles also wanted to have professional advice on planning the war's naval strategy and developing the specific operations to guarantee success at sea. Accordingly, he organized the "Commission of Conference" which was not unlike the old Board of Naval Commissioners.[16]

The performance of the Navy during the Civil War was a source of great satisfaction to many observers but in the eyes of the bureau

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15. K. Jack Bauer, "United States Naval Operations During the Mexican War" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1953), p. 550.
16. Charles O. Paullin, "A Half Century of Naval Administration in America, 1861-1911, Part I," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 38 (December, 1912), pp. 1319-1326. The Commission of Conference has been called the "General Board of the Civil War." Captain William L. Rodgers, "The Relations of the War College to the Navy Department," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 38 (September, 1912), p. 842.

critics, the praise should not have fallen on the bureaus but on a commendably extemporized organization, a capable Secretary, and an experienced Assistant Secretary.[17] However in the mind of the public and particularly Congress, the war proved conclusively that the bureaus had withstood a severe test and came through triumphantly. This conviction created a wall of security around the bureau system which the advocates of change found almost impenetrable.[18] Of course the necessity to layer a patchwork of temporary bodies between the bureaus and the Secretary gives fairly strong evidence that the system of naval administration left much to be desired. In the view of one distinguished officer who served in the war and who later spearheaded the drive for a change, "the Civil War brought out the fact that ... Naval Administration was organized on the theory of perpetual peace."[19] Another veteran described the performance this way:

> the Civil War came, and Departmental Chaos gave way to a scrub strategy board which in turn gave way to an assistant secretaryship filled by an ex-naval officer, not, however,

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17. Paullin, "Naval Administration, 1861-1911, Part II," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 39 (March, 1913), p. 192.
18. Rodgers, "The Relations of the War College to the Navy Department, p. 843.
19. Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce, "The Relations between the War College and the Line Officers of the Navy," lecture delivered by Luce at the Naval War College, June 3, 1911, Naval War College Archives.

without wading through Pinaforean experiences before reaching some sort of possible system.[20]

With the end of the war came the end of the wartime superstructure, including the assistant secretaryship, and the Navy resumed its peacetime organization. Attempts were made to preserve some of the innovations of Gideon Welles but they met with failure.[21] Naval thinking between the end of the Civil War and the 1880's was not conducive to reform. The unparalleled violence of the war revulsed even the military officers.[22] The Navy was said to be "comatose"[23] and was allegedly regarded by the public soley as an instrument of "protection against the wholly improbable danger of [the American] coast being attacked," and "a thing to be admired and to be proud of, but not to be used."[24]

It was not until the renascence of the Navy in the 1880's that the movement to adapt the organization to wartime needs met with success.[25] Three organizational changes, during this era contributed

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20. Captain McCarty Little, "The Strategic Naval War Game or Chart Maneuver," lecture delivered by Little at the Naval War College, June 10, 1911, Naval War College Archives.
21. Paullin, "Naval Administration, 1861-1911, Part III," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 39 (June, 1913), pp. 737-738.
22. Rear Admiral Bradley A. Fiske, From Midshipman to Rear Admiral, (New York: The Century Co., 1919), p. 71.
23. Ibid., p. 47.
24. Ibid., p. 133.
25. In this connection it is of interest to note that the period from 1881 to 1897 was marked by an unusually long tenure in office by successive Secretaries, averaging 3.2 years. Paullin, "Naval Administration, 1861-1911, Part V," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 39 (September, 1913), p. 1247.

to the creation of the General Board. In March of 1882, Secretary William H. Hunt established the Office of Naval Intelligence under the Bureau of Navigation, and charged it with the mission of gathering information for the Navy's use in war and peace.[26] In June of 1889, Secretary Benjamin F. Tracy expanded the role of the Bureau of Navigation to encompass the supervision of the fleet. Both events revealed an increasing awareness of the importance of adequate preparation in advance of war and a concomitant inability of the bureaus to satisfy the needs of the "new Navy." The third and most significant contributing factor which gave rise to the General Board was the establishment of the Naval War College.

The College was founded in October of 1884 by Secretary William E. Chandler, capping many years of effort on the part of Commodore Stephen B. Luce. Luce had long expressed concern about the "crass ignorance" of naval officers in the art of war and the "imbecility" of the Navy Department as a director of naval operations during war.[27] He wanted to elevate "naval warfare from the empirical stage to the dignity of a naval science."[28] Luce's experiences in the Civil War later led him to conclude that there

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26. This act has been termed the "first step in the direction of organized preparation for war." Rear Admiral Richard Wainwright, "The General Board," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 48 (February, 1922), p. 192. See also, Henry P. Beers, "The Development of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations," Military Affairs, Vol. 10 (Spring, 1946), p. 47.
27. Luce to Mahan, July 15, 1907, Naval War College Archives.
28. Ibid.

was a need for an institution of strategic study to parallel the remarkable developments which had taken place in the area of naval material.[29] He had been tremendously impressed with the knowledge which General William Sherman demonstrated during a meeting Luce had with him in connection with the campaign against Charleston, S. C. in 1865, and he came away with the indelible conviction that not only were there underlying strategic principles which governed land campaigns, but naval warfare as well. How essential it was then to have naval officers trained in those principles so that there would be a body of naval officers to advise the Secretary in both peace and war.[30] As early as 1877, Luce laid before Secretary Richard W. Thompson a proposal to establish a school for senior naval officers, patterned on the Army's Artillery School at Fort Monroe, Virginia, and devoted to the teaching of the strategic and tactical use of the new tools of naval warfare.[31] However it was not until seven years later that a sympathetic Secretary, William Whitney, gave life to Luce's dream. He appointed a board of three naval officers, one of whom was Luce, and directed it to provide him with specific

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29. Conversation between Mahan and Commander C. G. Flach, Royal Swedish Navy, and quoted in a lecture delivered by Commander Flach at Stockholm, November 24, 1894, Naval War College Archives.
30. Albert L. Gleaves, Life and Letters of Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce, U. S. Navy, Founder of the Naval War College, (New York: Putnam's, 1925), p. 102.
31. Luce to Richard W. Thompson, August 8, 1877, Luce Papers.

recommendations for a "post graduate course, or school of application."[32] Luce and his colleagues reported that the school ought to be established at Newport, Rhode Island, should teach law, history, and the science and art of war, and be pledged to the true pursuit of the naval profession - war.[33]

The actual contribution of the War College to the Navy's war readiness was very limited during the first 10 years of its existence, but it planted the seed for additional growth in the direction of a war planning organization within the departmental hierarchy, and it did give Mahan an opportunity to develop his Sea Power theories. In him Luce had found someone who would do for naval science what "Jomini did for military science."[34] The refinement of Mahan's thinking while at the War College and the popularization of his theses gave courage to those who were searching for a form of organization worthy of executing Mahan's doctrines.

In 1893, under the presidency of Commander Henry C. Taylor, the College began to exercise some of the functions of a war planning agency. Taylor, one of the most dominant and influential naval officers of this period, had the confidence of all segments of the navy, and not just the line officer insurgents. Once convinced of a

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32. U.S., Congress, Senate, Executive Document No. 68, 48th Cong., 2nd sess., (Washington, 1885), p. 2.
33. Ibid., pp. 3-8.
34. Luce to Mahan, July 15, 1907, Naval War College Archives.

particular course to follow, he demonstrated incredible persistence, but without alienating those of a less progressive mind. He was also a devoted naval expansionist and believed that the Navy, as an integral component of the nation, should grow, physically and organizationally, with the nation.[35] Taylor instituted a system of war games at the College and developed plans of campaign against likely enemies but his efforts were frustrated by the realization that, while the College atmosphere was useful for "theoretical discussion," it could not perform as a practical war planning agency without detracting seriously from its primary mission of education. Something else was needed - a general staff - not at Newport but in the national capital, and designed to generate the plans which the War College experience had shown to be so essential to readiness for war.[36] Taylor pointed to two events in recent history which demonstrated the need for a general staff: the Virginius affair and the Chilean "crisis" of 1891. Taylor saw in both instances examples of gross unpreparedness for war and felt that if the Navy had actually been tested, "national

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35. Captain Richard Wainwright, "Remarks at the Unveiling of Portrait of Rear Admiral H. C. Taylor," delivered at the Naval War College, September 7, 1906, Naval War College Archives.
36. Taylor's testimony before the House Naval Affairs Committee, April 11, 1904, U.S., Congress, House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Appropriation Bill for 1905 Subjects and on H. R. 15403 for General Board, 58th Cong., 2nd sess., House Report No. 164, (Washington, 1904), p. 950.

disaster might have been the result."[37] Taylor was appalled to find, in response to his inquiry, that no bureau or office in the Navy Department would acknowledge responsibility for the preparations of war plans.[38] Yet he was convinced that:

> the events which precede and follow war progress too quickly to allow time for general or special reconnaissance of the theatre of operations, either at home or abroad. Hence this work which took place formerly in time of war should be made now in time of peace . . . . [The] measures taken upon the eve of war - a time of emergency and excitement - will naturally be imperfect, ill digested and extravagant.[39]

He then began at the War College a study of possible general staff agencies for the Navy. He and his officers examined many different forms of organization including the British Board of Admiralty and the General Staff of the German Army. The German organization looked ideal to Taylor except that it would have to be modified "to suit the different political conditions" in the United States.[40]

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37. Taylor's testimony before the House Naval Affairs Committee, April 11, 1904, U.S., Congress, House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Appropriation Bill for 1905 Subjects and on H. R. 15403 for General Board, 58th Cong., 2nd sess., House Report No. 164, (Washington, 1904), p. 904. During the Chilean affair, an informal strategy board was convened in Washington. Mahan and others acted as consultants to Secretary Benjamin F. Tracy but they exercised little or no influence upon him. Mahan to Luce, September 20, 1897, Luce Papers.
38. House Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Appropriations for 1905 and for General Board, p. 950.
39. Taylor to Governor Brown of Rhode Island, February 10, 1894, War College Archives.
40. Rear Admiral Henry C. Taylor, "The Fleet," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 29 (December, 1903) p. 803.

Naval officers were impressed with the efficiency of the German litary machine which overwhelmed the French in 1870 and they concluded that the ease with which the Germans accomplished the transition from war to peace was traceable to the studies and work of the German General Staff.[41]

While Taylor's goal was to emulate the Germans, realism dictated something less. He would settle initially for a change which would combine the Naval War College with the Office of Naval Intelligence under one head and with general staff duties. This body would at first be only advisory in character but eventually evolve into a complete general staff apparatus.[42] Even this minimum program met with little encouragement in Washington. Taylor found that his soundings revealed "overwhelming opposition" to his proposals.[43] Secretary Hilary Herbert was uninterested and despite Taylor's urgings, he was unable to "get his mind on it for ten seconds."[44] Herbert's Assistant Secretary, William McAdoo was more sympathetic. He told the War College officers that while he

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41. Captain French E. Chadwick, "The Naval War College," lecture delivered by Chadwick at the Naval War College, March 4, 1902, Naval War College Archives.
42. Taylor, "The Fleet," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol 29 (December, 1903), p. 803.
43. Taylor to Luce, January 13, 1896, Luce Papers.
44. Taylor to Luce, June 22, 1896, Luce Papers. Ironically, Taylor sensed that Secretary Herbert was at the time using the War College as a general staff and he (Taylor) as a chief of staff. Taylor to Luce, January 13, 1896, Luce Papers.

thought the Secretary of the Navy was doing the best possible job under the burden of an inflexible organization, he was convinced that the advent of war would require many substantial changes in naval administration to ensure success.[45]

Taylor was forced to conclude that the general staff would have to "grow slowly by a process of natural evolution in the Bureau of Navigation."[46]. The best way to achieve this was to "create a situation gradually... then let legislation or regulation ratify such condition."[47] Luce hoped that if evolution were the only practicable solution then it would occur at the War College and not at a Bureau. Taylor replied that this would not be acceptable to the administration principally because of the resistance of the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, Rear Admiral Francis F. Ramsay, long a nemesis of the College.[48]

Taylor's departure from the War College in 1896 and his assignment to sea duty made it more difficult to carry on his campaign but he did manage a visit to Washington in December of 1897 to determine whether or not the atmosphere had changed with the arrival in office of Secretary of the Navy John D. Long and his new assistant, Theodore Roosevelt. It had not. Taylor reported that

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45. William McAdoo, "Opening Address at Naval War College," delivered June 2, 1896, Naval War College Archives.
46. Taylor to Luce, January 13, 1896, Luce Papers.
47. Taylor to Luce, October 1, 1896, Luce Papers.
48. Taylor to Luce, January 22, 1896, Luce Papers.

while Roosevelt was "well disposed" but not "eager", Long was somewhat "cold" to his ideas.[49]

The Spanish-American War provided the bureau system with another test of its effectiveness and armed the general staff proponents with more evidence for their case. Captain (later Admiral) George Dewey, who had not yet aligned himself with the advocates of change, found serious problems associated with his efforts to get ready for his tour as squadron commander in the Far East. Prior to taking command he had searched the Department's files for information on the Philippines and the latest available was dated 1876.[50] Not one ship of his squadron had even a peacetime allowance of ammunition and some ships had only 60 per-cent of allowance.[51] Throughout the whole navy there was a serious shortage of the superior smokeless powder, the coal was of inferior quality, the fleet suffered from a severe imbalance in that there were not enough colliers, supply, repair, and hospital ships. There was an inadequate reserve of personnel to meet the demands of the many ships suddenly acquired and commissioned. The principal naval base at Key West was not capable of rendering logistic support to the fleet. In short, the Navy

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49. Taylor to Luce, December 3, 1897, Luce Papers.
50. Commander Nathan Sargent, "The Preparations at Hong Kong, Battle of Manila Bay, Enforcement of Blockade, and Operations Resulting in the Surrender of Manila," unpublished mss. prepared by Sargent under the direction of Dewey, Dewey Papers, Library of Congress, p. 7.
51. Ibid., pp. 3-4.

was not prepared for war, "only less unprepared than Spain."[52] War plans, albeit crude ones, were available but since they originated in different offices they often conflicted in assumptions and strategy.[53]

After the war began, Secretary Long, at the urging of Taylor hurriedly organized the Naval War Strategy Board, with Roosevelt, Mahan, and several other naval officers as members. The Board's functions involved most of the duties which Taylor had considered appropriate to a general staff, including war plans, employment of the fleet, and the gathering and collating of intelligence information.[54] The activities of the War Board were marked by considerable success; it was in the view of one naval officer, "the only organization either in the War or Navy Department that was unembarassed by the pressing administrative details. It being ready and willing, the President turned to it because nobody else was free to answer his demands."[55]

Although the war interrupted the proselytism of Taylor, Luce was still available and he continued to exert influence whenever and

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52. Captain Bowman H. McCalla, "Lessons of the Spanish American War," unpublished mss. dated 1899, Naval War College Archives.
53. Plans for War against Spain, General Board Papers, Office of Naval History, Washington, D. C.
54. Wainwright, "The General Board," p. 193; Little, "The Strategic Naval War Game or Chart Maneuver,"; Paullin, "Naval Administration, Part X," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 40 (January, 1914), p. 116.
55. Rodgers, "The Relations of the War College to the Navy Department," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 38, p. 844.

wherever he could. He wrote Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, criticized management of the war effort and asked him to support the passage of a law providing for a general staff.[56] Lodge, while sympathetic, disputed Luce's contention of mal-administration. It was obviously not the time to suggest to a Republican Senator that the Republicans were demonstrating ineptitude in the conduct of the war.[57] Luce also enlisted the willing support of Mahan, expressing the hope that the good work of the Naval War Strategy Board would be instrumental in achieving a permanent general staff organization after the war.[58] Mahan did try, without success, to convince Secretary Long of the merits of Luce's arguments.[59] Long's response left little doubt where he stood. As soon as the war concluded he disestablished the Strategy Board and returned to the peacetime organization. However, the Board's work on the one hand, and the unpreparedness of the Navy on the other served to make many of the doubters within the service aware that a change, looking to the creation of a permanent war planning body, was sorely needed.[60]

Taylor resumed his quest after the war ended and although he was offered the prestigious position of superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy, he declined and told Long that he would prefer a less

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56. Luce to Lodge, May 24, 1898, Luce Papers.
57. Lodge to Luce, May 27, 1898, Luce Papers.
58. Luce to Mahan, August 25, 1898, Luce Papers.
59. William D. Puleston, Mahan: The Life and Work of Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, U.S.N., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939), p. 204.
60. House Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Appropriations for 1905 and for General Board, pp. 950-951.

demanding assignment, one which would permit him to devote more time to the development of a general staff. He felt this way despite Long's continuing resistance to any talk of a general staff because of the association which it had with a "royal or imperial government." But slowly, Taylor's persistence began to pay some dividends. Long finally agreed to listen to Taylor's specific proposals.[61]

Fortunately for Taylor, Long was presented with another difficulty. What would he do with the hero of Manila Bay, George Dewey? He had been promoted by Act of Congress to the rank of "Admiral of the Navy" with lifetime tenure. He was too senior to hold a bureau position or even a fleet commander's job. Although he did toy with the idea of seeking the Democratic presidential nomination, both he and the Democratic bosses recognized that he was no match for William Jennings Bryan. Some of his friends in the service urged him to become President of the Board of Inspection and Survey, act as arbiter of the many inter-bureau disputes, and strengthen the hand of the "sea-going element of the Navy."[62] It was however most unlikely

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61. Taylor to Long, January 30, 1900, Long Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Mass.
62. Rear Admiral Fred Rodgers to Dewey, October 9, 1899, Dewey Papers. At the time, Rodgers was President of the Board of Inspection and Survey, and had, six months before, led a movement within the Department to expand the role of his Board and develop it into a "Board of Control," with Congressional sanction, to curb the independence of the bureau chiefs and become the principal organ within the Navy Department for the development of naval policy. Rodgers to the Board on the Bureaus of the Navy Department, May 31, 1899, copy in Dewey Papers.

that Dewey would be willing to return to a position which he had held a Captain prior to the war.

Taylor, recognizing Long's dilemma, lost no time in working out a plan for a general staff, and he submitted one on February 14, 1900. He prefaced his proposal with a warning to the Secretary that a change was needed as a matter of urgency for any more delay would result in "grave injury to the country's future."[63] Taylor wrote of the need for a staff to direct the business of war and the peace-time planning for war. He would assign to the staff three basic functions: to gather information on foreign powers; to prepare war plans; and to train officers in the art of war making and war planning. While he agreed that the Naval War College and the Office of Naval Intelligence contained the basic general staff structure, their work had to be coordinated by a common superior - either an Assistant Secretary of the Navy or the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation. Taylor sensed the Congressional resistance to the general staff by advising Long not to get Congressional sanction prior to announcing the formation of the staff. Instead he should let it develop until its usefulness was demonstrated, then ask Congress to legalize it.

Taylor's general staff machinery included:

1) Chief, Bureau of Navigation to be the Chief of General Staff;

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63. Taylor to Long, February 14, 1900, Long Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

2) The general staff would consist of the officers attached to the Naval War College and the Office of Naval Intelligence;

3) Two boards would be created to pass on the work of the staff. The first would consist of five members: Chief, Bureau of Navigation, President of the Naval War College, the latter's principal assistant, the Chief Intelligence Officer and his principal assistant. This board would meet frequently and "consult as to war plans and information." The second board would consist of nine members, the five listed above and, in addition, the senior officer of the Navy, (at the time Dewey), his Chief of Staff, the Commander of the North Atlantic Fleet and his Chief of Staff. This second board would meet once a year and pass on the work accomplished by the general staff during the preceding 12 months. The Chief of the Bureau of Navigation would have custody of the war plans and would be charged with the general direction and supervision of the Naval War College and the Office of Naval Intelligence. When the war plans required implementing action by the bureaus, the general staff would transmit them to the Secretary of the Navy.[64]

Long saw merit in the part of Taylor's scheme which called for a board under the leadership of George Dewey, but he was unwilling to go along with it completely. While he recognized that "the experience of war with Spain showed the need of a general staff," he did not think

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64. Memorandum by Captain Henry C. Taylor forwarded to Secretary of the Navy, February 14, 1900, copy in Luce Papers; also published in United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 26 (March, 1900), pp. 441-448.

that the Navy was "quite ready for such a comprehensive change" as Taylor posited.[65] He feared that a general staff would challenge the principle of civil control of the military, lead to excessive expenditures, promote professional jealousy between line and staff officers, and make the Secretary of the Navy a "mere figurehead."[66]

Although Taylor felt that his plan embodied a general staff of the "simplest kind," he thought some organization however weak was better than none and, after consultation with Dewey, he modified his recommendations to provide for only one board and he eliminated all reference to the terms "general staff" and "chief of staff." Long was willing to buy this version and, accordingly, on March 13, 1900, he authorized the creation of the General Board of the Navy.

How tenuous was the Board's birth is best revealed by Long's threat to Taylor that he was creating it "avowedly as an experiment" and "would dissolve it the moment it was not useful."[67] Ironically, the problem of Dewey's disposition, a major factor in Long's decision to accept the organization, provided the Board with a prestigious president and a degree of survivability which would make Long's warning easier to issue than to implement.[68]

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65. John D. Long, The New American Navy (2 vols., New York: The Outlook Co., 1903), Vol. 1, pp. 122-123.
66. Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 183-186.
67. House Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Appropriations for 1905 and for General Board, p. 951.
68. Testimony of Rear Admiral Cameron Winslow, U.S.N., Congress, House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Estimates Submitted by the Secretary of the Navy, 1916, (Washington, 1916), Vol. 1, p. 1401.

CHAPTER II

THE TAYLOR ERA, 1900 - 1904

The history of the General Board from its inception in March of 1900 until mid-1904, centers for the most part on its most dominant member during the period, Captain (later Rear Admiral), Henry C. Taylor. Taylor originated the idea of the Board, and guided it through its somewhat stormy first years. Admiral George Dewey, the Board's famous president, exercised a good deal of influence, but he deferred to Taylor in the critical management of the Board's development, and left to him the business of defining and refining the Board's role in naval administration. He considered Taylor an indispensable member of the Board and, after Taylor had denied a report that he planned to leave it, Dewey expressed great relief. "I am glad to know," he wrote Taylor, "you do not contemplate leaving the Board. It would be a great mistake, for I fear no one would be able to take your place at present. Let's get it well underway before going below."[1]

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1. Admiral George Dewey to Rear Admiral Henry C. Taylor, July 17, 1901, Taylor Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

Taylor's goals for the General Board, all more or less endorsed Dewey, were to preserve its existence in the face of Secretary John D. Long's threat to disestablish it the moment it proved not useful; to use it to increase the Navy's war readiness, and to expand it into a more powerful and authoritative organ, akin to a general staff. Taylor, an evolutionist when it came to naval administration, was well aware that the opposition to the general staff idea, inside and outside the service, could only be overcome by patience, persistence, and tact. Sudden death ended Taylor's endeavors in July of 1904, and while he did not achieve his long sought general staff, he did accomplish the Board's survival by demonstrating its value.

Secretary Long's directive of March 13, 1900, drafted by Taylor,[2] specified, rather briefly, the Board's membership, function, and frequency of meetings. There were to be two categories of membership: ex-officio and individual. The ex-officio members were: the Admiral of the Navy, the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, the Chief Intelligence Officer, the President of the Naval War College, and the principal assistant of the last two officials; individual memberships were to be three in number of or above the rank of Lieutenant Commander. The Board's stated purpose was to "ensure the efficient preparation of the fleet in case of war and for the naval

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2. Taylor to Dewey, March 15, 1900, Dewey Papers.

defense of the coast." The Chief of the Bureau of Navigation was designated the custodian of the Board's war plans and was to act as the presiding officer in the absence of the Admiral of the Navy. Meetings were to take place at least once each month, but two of the monthly sessions during the year had to include daily meetings of at least one week's duration. Finally, a quorum was to consist of at least five members.[3]

The General Order summarized above was designed for service-wide publication and had to be followed up with more detailed and confidential instructions for the guidance of the Board. These came in a letter from Long which was based largely on a memorandum which Taylor had submitted to him.[4] Secretary Long's letter is of such key importance to the Board's early history that most of it is quoted below:

> The purpose of this General Board is to devise plans which will employ our naval force to the best advantage; to organize during peace a proper defense of our coasts; to utilize fully the naval reserves and merchant marine for the service of the general government; to effect by frequent consultation with the army chief, a full and cordial cooperation of the two services in case of war; to be prepared at all times to advise the Secretary of the Navy, when so directed by him, as to the disposition of the Fleet under the various war conditions which may arise.
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> Further; to prepare plans of campaign for such theatres of war at home, in our dependencies, or abroad as may in any

3. Navy Department General Order Number 544, March 13, 1900, Record Group 80, National Archives.
4. Taylor to Long, March 29, 1900, General Board File 401.

case become the scene of hostilities; to fix upon the naval bases indicated by strategy in such theatres; to become acquainted with them familiarly and to recommend to the Secretary such action as may be needed to prepare these bases for the purpose intended; to observe the probable base of foreign navies in such fields of action; to measure their forces; and to deduce therefrom their plans of campaign, and base our preparations upon them, having in view their special features of strength and weakness as developed by our investigation.

The General Board, unless otherwise directed by the Secretary, shall decide upon the fields of action to be studied.

The Department desires the General Board to give its attention first to the following subjects, which are regarded by the Department as of urgency:

(a) Plans for defense of our dependicies including considerations of the strategic value of adjacent territory of importance, and its military relation to our possessions. The location of naval bases, and the numbers and kind of ships needed for the maintenance of our power in our dependencies in case of war.

(b) Complete plans of campaign applicable to various war conditions in the Philippines and their neighborhood.

The Department wishes to impress upon the Board the importance of confining its work to the large field indicated in the foregoing and of concentrating its efforts upon the essential principles described therein, to the exclusion of technical questions of material and manufacture, which are in charge of the various Bureaus of the Navy Department.

It is not with the constructing, manning, arming and equipping of the ships that the General Board is concerned, but with recommendations as to the proper disposition of the Fleet.[5]

This is a truly remarkable document, for not only did it show the vast responsibilities thrust upon the Navy as a result of the territorial settlement with Spain, but it also underlined the need for some organization other than the bureaus to address these requirements. Long's cautionary advice to the Board, contained in the last two paragraphs, was inserted at Taylor's request and is expressive of Taylor's fear that disputes between the bureaus and the Board would

5. Long to Dewey, March 30, 1900, General Board File 401.

undermine the latter's usefulness.[6]

Soon after Long's instructions were received, Taylor drew up a plan of work and it was presented to the Board at its first meeting in the State, War, and Navy Building on April 16, 1900. At Taylor's suggestion, the members decided to begin planning for three contingencies listed in order of decreasing probability: seizure of Puerto Rico by Germany; war with Germany over occupation of South American territory; and war with England over the control of the Isthmian Canal. It was also agreed to develop position papers with respect to coast defense, logistics, mobilization, force requirements, base requirements, and disposition of the fleet.[7]

The initial service reaction to the birth of the Board was mixed. Maximists like Commander Richard Wainwright were disappointed that the Secretary had not given the Board the teeth to execute as well as develop naval policy. He feared that without Taylor's ability and Dewey's prestige, it would become a useless appendage.[8] On the other hand, Dewey had high hopes for the Board. He saw it as the twentieth century successor to the Board of Navy Commissioners.[9]

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6. Taylor to Long, March 29, 1900, General Board File 401.
7. Dewey to Rear Admiral Arent S. Crowninshield, April 11, 1900, General Board File 401; General Board Minutes, April 16, 1900, Vol. 1, p. 3.
8. Wainwright to Lieutenant Commander William S. Sims, June 20, 1904, Sims Papers, Office of Naval History, Washington, D. C.
9. Dewey to Taylor, May 6, 1901, Taylor Papers, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; Dewey to Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce, February 17, 1903, Luce Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

Taylor looked upon the Board as "a natural centre and head of a General Staff... [which] will be of continuing benefit to the service, and will in time come to speak with an authority, not due alone to powers conferred upon it by Departmental orders but to its own inherent strength of position... and to the solid logic of its war plans."[10] Dissatisfaction was registered by the staff corps officers. They resented their exclusion from membership and viewed General Order 544 as a move to place the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, a line officer in a position superior to the bureau chiefs who were members of the staff corps. Bureau advocates were concerned that the Board would erode their large role in the naval hierarchy.[11] The staff officers, upon whom the line depended for pay, supplies, health care, logistic facilities, and the construction of ships, continued to resent this slight in the years to follow and, while it was only one of many sources of contention between the line and staff, it did contribute to the rift between them. One of the staff corps officers told a group of line officers at the Naval War College that "the existing status [between line and staff] might truly be said to represent two hostile camps, between which messages are sent only under a flag of truce. ... Efforts to work in harmony

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10. Taylor to Dewey, October 27, 1900, Dewey Papers.
11. Army-Navy Journal, March 24, 1900, Vol 27, p. 700. In fact, Long did consult with the chiefs of bureau prior to issuing his order and they offered no objection to it. Taylor to Dewey, March 15, 1900, Dewey Papers.

are attempted but are treated as suspects. The motto for each appears to be Timeo Danaos et Dona Ferrentes."[12]

Taylor sought to assuage the critics and reassure the bureaucrats that the General Board had enough to do without meddling in bureau business. "I understand it to be the Department's wish," wrote Taylor, "that the 'General Board' shall confine itself to this large field of work [war plans] and avoid all questions of material or personnel which... are already cared for intelligently and efficiently by the able Chiefs of Bureau ...."[13]

Although Long had provided for a total of nine members on the Board (six ex-officio and three designated by name), he initially appointed eleven officers. Those assigned by name were: Taylor, Captain Robley D. Evans (Taylor's brother-in-law), Captain Charles E. Clark, Captain French E. Chadwick, and Colonel George C. Reid, U. S. Marine Corps.[14] Reid's selection was somewhat of a surprise but he was included at Taylor's insistence that the interests of the Marine Corps be represented.[15] In April of 1901, membership provisions were changed to eliminate the assistants to the President of the Naval War College and the Chief Intelligence Officer and to permit the Secretary to designate by name any number of

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12. Pay Inspector T. H. Hicks, "The Need for Economy and Coordination in the Navy," lecture delivered at the Naval War College, September, 1909, Naval War College Archives, Newport, R. I.
13. Taylor to Editor, Army-Navy Journal, published in Army-Navy Journal, June 16, 1900, Vol. 37, p. 996.
14. Long to Dewey, March 29, 1900, General Board File 401.
15. Taylor to Long, March 29, 1900, General Board File 401.

members of the grade of Lieutenant Commander or higher. This revision was undoubtedly provided to give the Secretary more flexibility in Board assignments.[16]

Many of the officers listed above had duties outside the Board which meant that they could not devote full time to the work that had to be done. Recognizing this, Taylor enlisted the assistance of the War College and Office of Naval Intelligence, and the heads of these two institutions each assigned one officer to work full time on Board matters.[17] Taylor also attempted to augment the staff of the Board by assigning to it full time experienced junior officers, fresh from sea duty, but Long refused to acquiesce.[18] Taylor persisted and, in April 1902, after Long's departure from office, and after Taylor became Chief of the Bureau of Navigation with control over personnel assignments, officers began to be assigned to the Board for full time duty, not as voting members, but as staff assistants.

As has been indicated earlier, Dewey did not get involved with Board details; these he left to Taylor. However, when it came to the selection of individuals for duty with the Board, Dewey maintained tight control. He insisted that all who came had to be outstanding naval officers; consequently the Board's roster for the period of his

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16. Navy Department General Order Number 43, April 16, 1901, Record Group 80, National Archives.
17. Taylor to Dewey, November 26, 1900, Dewey Papers.
18. Taylor to Dewey, November 26, 1900, Dewey Papers.

presidency looks like a Who's Who of the U. S. Navy.[19] An officer who graduated from the Naval Academy between 1865 and 1892 had, on the average, a 13 per cent chance of becoming an Admiral.[20] In contrast, 79 per cent of the officers attached to the General Board from 1900 to 1914 made flag rank sometime after their assignment.[21] The turnover of officers on the Board was about average. Tour lengths varied from officer to officer but the mean for staff and members was two years and two months.[22]

Affiliation with the Board soon became indicative of career success and hence many of the ambitious officers who aspired to high leadership positions within the Navy sought duty with it, either as a member or on the staff.[23] One officer, Lieutenant Commander Arthur MacArthur, brother of Douglas MacArthur, enlisted the support of his famous father, General Arthur MacArthur, to get orders to the Board.[24] Captain Charles S. Sperry wanted Board duty

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19. Rear Admiral Bradley A. Fiske to Dewey, August 13, 1914, Dewey Papers; Lecture delivered at the U. S. Naval Academy by Rear Admiral William L. Rodgers, October 6, 1923, copy in General Board File 401. Rodgers was assigned to the Board in 1903, 1911 to 1913, and 1915 to 1916. Dewey was President of the General Board until his death in January of 1917.
20. Ronald G. Spector, "Professors of War," (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Yale University, 1967), p. 73.
21. Based on an analysis of General Board records and Naval Personnel Registers.
22. General Board Rosters, 1900-1914. Dewey is not included in the average because of the unusually long length of his tour with the Board - 17 years.
23. G. B. Bradshaw to W. K. Harrison, April 25, 1910, Sims Papers.
24. General Arthur MacArthur to Dewey, January 20, 1912, Dewey Papers.

because he felt it provided "the best training for the duties of a flag officer."[25] Another viewed duty on the General Board "the best possible duty a captain could have on shore, especially if he cherished aspiration toward flying his flag afloat."[26] Still others found that their experience with the Board gave them a broadened perspective not attainable in other sea and shore positions.[27] In recalling his service with the Board, Rear Admiral Bradley A. Fiske wrote that:

> the members carried on with the most remarkable absence of anything like personal self-seeking. .. The aim of every man seemed to be to find out and urge whatever was best for the navy, and it was considered a virtue in a man to be willing to say that he had made a mistake and to change his opinion on proper evidence. Nothing was considered more deplorable than pride of opinion.[28]

The Board's membership policy justified Dewey's statement in 1913 that "the program to which the General Board has adhered throughout the past...years may safely be accepted as expressing the best thought of the Naval Service...."[29]

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25. Sperry to wife, August 25, 1902, Sperry Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
26. Rear Admiral Bradley A. Fiske, From Midshipman to Rear Admiral, (New York: The Century Co., 1919), p. 475.
27. Lieutenant Commander Ridley McLean to Commander William S. Sims, May 18, 1911, Sims Papers; Captain Albert Gleaves to Dewey, July 10, 1910, Dewey Papers.
28. Fiske, From Midshipman to Rear Admiral, p. 476.
29. Dewey to A. H. Dutton, October 19, 1913, Dewey Papers.

Board decisions were taken by vote, each member, regardless of rank, receiving one vote. There were a number of occasions when the senior officer in the Navy, Admiral Dewey, found himself in the minority but, suppressing the traditional veto power of seniors over juniors, he forwarded, over his signature, recommendations which had been agreed to by the majority.[30] Dewey's disdain for seniority in this respect applied as well to the senior rear admirals who were assigned to the Board in the few months preceding their retirement. Although they out-ranked everyone but Dewey, the latter refused to assign them a role commensurate with their expectations, and he did not allow them to vote because they were not full-fledged members. One of them expressed considerable rancor over Dewey's attitude and complained to a member of the House Naval Affairs Committee that the denial of voting privilege placed him in a "mortifying" position with respect to his juniors.[31]

Apportionment of work within the Board was done through a system of committees. The first of these, the "Executive Committee," was appointed at the Board's initial meeting. Its members were the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, the President of the Naval War College, the Chief Intelligence Officer, and Captain Taylor. Taylor's status on this committee was unique since he alone did not have

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30. Dewey to President Marine Journal Company, March 23, 1904, Dewey Papers.
31. Rear Admiral French E. Chadwick to Congressman Alston G. Dayton, February 15, 1904, Dayton Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of the University of West Virginia.

ex-officio membership.[32] The function of the Executive Committee - to prepare the agenda for the Board meetings, to direct the efforts of the Board's staff, and to pre-digest the material to be considered by the full Board.[33] It is quite apparent from a reading of the Board Minutes that the Executive Committee exercised great influence; while the full Board averaged seldom more than 40 meetings per year, the Executive Committee was in session almost on a daily basis. Taylor was in turn able to play a dominant role within the Executive Committee since he was the only committeeman unencumbered by extra-Board duties. Although Dewey, by virtue of his position as President of the General Board, was eligible to attend Executive Committee meetings, he seldom did so; however he was aware of the Committee's work and was pleased with its performance.[34]

The Executive Committee remained the only permanent Committee until September of 1902, when it was decided to appoint two additional groups, the First and the Second Committees. The First Committee assumed cognizance over fleet organization, combined operations

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32. Memorandum attached to letter from Dewey to Crowninshield, April 11, 1900, General Board File 401; General Board Minutes, April 16, 1900, Vol. 1, p. 3. It is of interest that the April 11, 1900 document, prepared by Crowninshield, the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, was typewritten except for Taylor's name which was added in script presumably by Dewey before he returned it to Crowninshield. This may indicate that Crowninshield did not want to include Taylor on the Executive Committee for fear that he would, with his wide knowledge and reputation, dominate the Board and dilute Crowninshield's influence as Chief of the Bureau of Navigation.
33. General Board Minutes, August 26, 1902, pp. 191-192.
34. Taylor to Dewey, November 26, 1900, Dewey Papers.

with the Army, mobilization plans, and analyses of foreign fleets. The Second Committee was assigned the responsibilities for war plans, naval militia affairs, and sea transport.[35] Prior to the time that these two committees were appointed, the practice had been for the Executive Committee to divide the Board work among the staff and members in accordance with their qualifications.

Formal decisions on matters originating within the Board or referred to it by the Secretary of the Navy, were taken at the Board meetings. These lasted an average of two hours and began with a summary of the work of the committees since the last meeting; then the questions up for decision were briefed, discussed, and voted. With very few exceptions, the position adopted by the Executive Committee on the various issues were endorsed by the full Board.[36]

The relationships between the General Board on the one hand, and the Bureau of Navigation, Office of Naval Intelligence, and Naval War College on the other were very close. Together they acted as an embryonic general staff for the Navy Department, "a little ragged in its workings," but the best patchwork available short of reorganization.[37] The Chief of the Bureau of Navigation had supervision over ship movements, personnel, and both the Office of Naval Intelligence and Naval War College. He was looked on as the representative of the

35. General Board Minutes, September 23, 1902, Vol. 1, p. 195.
36. General Board Minutes, 1900-1914, Vols. 1-4.
37. Taylor to Luce, February 13, 1903, Luce Papers.

line faction of the Navy, those who had to fight the ships. The Secretary frequently called on him for advice on "military problems" as opposed to the technical matters occupying the other bureau chiefs.[38] As the only bureau chief on the General Board, he became the liaison between the Board and the Secretary, briefing and explaining to the latter the Board position on the many matters considered by it. He was also empowered to execute the recommendations of the Board which touched on his area of interest and would most likely do so since he participated in the Board's decision-making process. Finally, because he was in charge of officer personnel, he could and did present Dewey with a list of talented officers from which to choose Board members and staff. Evidently the effectiveness of the relationship between the Board and the Bureau of Navigation depended in large measure on the attitude of the Bureau Chief. From 1900 to April 1902, Rear Admiral Arent S. Crowninshield occupied this position and he was succeeded by Taylor. The contrast in the disposition of Taylor and Crowninshield toward the General Board was marked indeed; Taylor had a vested interest in the Board's success; Crowninshield did not, and while he did nothing to hinder the Board's progress, he didn't significantly contribute to it. Crowninshield's approach to the Board is partially explained by the strained relations which existed between

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38. Charles O. Paullin, "A Half Century of Naval Administration In America, Part VII," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 39 (September, 1913), p. 1257.

him and Dewey, based on the former's disparagement of Dewey's exploits at Manila Bay.[39]

Taylor's ascendance to the Bureau of Navigation resulted in an expansion of the Board's influence. As Chairman of the Executive Committee he was able to guide the Board's thinking, then represent it in person to the Secretary, and execute as much of it as lay within his power as bureau chief. The method of operation became so efficacious that Taylor could declare in 1903 that the Bureau of Navigation, acting jointly with the General Board, was virtually doing the business of a general staff.[40]

Another member of the General Board "family" was the Naval War College. It provided the General Board with an intellectual reservoir from which it could draw to develop and support its recommendations. During the early period of the Board's existence there were very few officers in the Navy who had had any training in strategic problem solving, and the vast majority of these were to be found at the War College.[41] The practice of submitting questions to the War College for study gave the students there actual practice in the solution of concrete issues and increased their value to the Board

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39. Crowninshield to Dewey, November 6, 1899; Dewey to Crowninshield, November 10, 1899, Dewey Papers.
40. General Board Minutes, December 28, 1903, Vol. 1, p. 378; Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, October 1, 1903, Annual Reports of the Navy Department, 1903, (Washington, 1903), pp. 498-499.
41. Memorandum by Rear Admiral Harry S. Knapp, February 17, 1922, General Board File 401.

and to the Navy.[42] The College played a key role in the consideration of war plans; the plan's assumptions were tested on the College game board and either proved or revised in accordance with the results obtained.[43] The fact that the President of the War College was a member of the Board sealed the bond between the Board and the College and, of course, ensured a mutuality of effort.

The Office of Naval Intelligence was the Board's "collector of information." It channeled to the Board information about foreign developments essential to proper judgment.[44] Here again the relationship was solidified by the assignment of the Chief Intelligence Officer to Board membership. Intelligence collection and evaluation proved to be the weakest elements in the Board's decision making process. A large portion of the information flowing in to the Office of Naval Intelligence was gathered by naval attachés. However there were only a few of them assigned; one was expected to cover the whole of France, Russia, and Germany; another all of Japan and China; none were sent to Latin American countries on a permanent basis until 1910.[45] Oftentimes the quality of the attachés left much to be desired. Commander Reginald R. Belknap, a former attaché himself, complained

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42. Captain Charles S. Sperry to Captain William Swift, March 25, 1904, General Board File 421.
43. Dewey to Secretary of the Navy, June 29, 1901, General Board Letters, Vol. 1, p. 247.
44. Ibid.
45. Henry P. Beers, "The Development of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Part I," Military Affairs, Vol. 10 (Spring, 1946), p. 47.

that the assignment and employment of attachés were not taken seriously, attachés weren't adequately trained, they compared unfavorably with their foreign counterparts, many were lacking in language training, and were often ignorant of even the rudiments of national policy.[46] Attachés were prone to concentrate too much on technical aspects of foreign navies, such as details of ship construction and ordnance, and too little on a potential enemy's intentions, capabilities, port defenses, and the like.[47] So deficient was the information, at least with respect to Germany, that one officer proposed that a Navy ship be detailed to make an extensive European cruise, "ostensibly to 'show the flag' but in reality to make a special business ... of securing information of military character, relating both to ships and harbor defenses."[48]

Until July of 1903 there were no continuing formal relationships between the Army and Navy except at the Cabinet level. The Spanish-American War had illustrated the need for cooperation, but even before that attempts had been made by Taylor and Assistant Secretary of the Navy William McAdoo to weld the services together, for they

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46. Commander Reginald R. Belknap, "Naval Attaches," unpublished mss., December 18, 1913, General Board File 429.
47. Captain William L. Rodgers, "The Relations of the War College to the Navy Department," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 38 (September, 1912), pp. 846-847.
48. Memorandum by Commander Joseph L. Jayne, Secretary of the General Board, January 5, 1910, General Board File 420-1.

had mutual interest in many areas, particularly in coast defense.[49]

en Taylor was President of the Naval War College he had seen the importance of a "Joint Board of the Army and Navy," and he worked toward the establishment of such an organization.[50] One of the difficulties operating against the meshing of the two services was the lack of a body in either service which specialized in strategic functions. With the formation of the General Board in 1900 and the Army General Staff in February of 1903 the way was clear to join hands and, in July of 1903, the War and Navy Departments agreed to form a "joint board ... for the purpose of ... reaching common conclusions regarding all matters calling for the cooperation of the two services." Admiral Dewey, Rear Admiral Taylor, Captain John E. Pillsbury, and Commander William J. Barnette, all members of the General Board, were selected as the Navy representatives on the Joint Board, and Dewey, because of his seniority, became chairman.[51] It is not surprising then that the Navy views put forward at the Joint Board meetings were actually expressive of General Board policy. In fact, on major issues, Navy members of the Joint Board were formally instructed by the full General Board prior to their conferences with their Army counterparts.

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49. William McAdoo to Taylor, April 27, 1896, Naval War College Archives.
50. Taylor to Luce, October 1, 1896, Luce Papers.
51. Navy Department General Order Number 136, July 18, 1903, publishing the Army and Navy departmental agreement of July 17, 1903, Record Group 80, National Archives.

The relations between the Board and the bureaus (other than the Bureau of Navigation), were, for the most part, disharmonious, strained, non-productive, and harmful to the Navy. Despite the fact that the bureau chiefs had offered no objection to Long's move to establish the General Board, they saw in it a vehicle which would eventually undermine their great power and independence. They were well aware that the Board represented only the first small step by Taylor in the direction of a general staff which would insert itself between them and the Secretary, and most of them were bound and determined to do all they could to stem any such movement. When President Theodore Roosevelt described the General Board as "fostering the creation of a general staff," their estimate was confirmed and their concern escalated.[52]

There were two categories of bureau chiefs: line officers and staff corps officers. The line officers were always assigned to the Bureau of Navigation and usually to the Bureau of Equipment, Bureau of Ordnance, and Bureau of Steam Engineering.[53] Staff Corps officers were given the Bureaus of Yards and Docks, Construction

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52. Fred L. Israel, ed. The State of the Union Messages of the Presidents, 1790-1966, (New York: Chelsea House-Robert Hector, 1966), Vol. 2, p. 2041.

53. Prior to 1899, the Chief of the Bureau of Steam Engineering was a staff corps officer but by the Personnel Act of 1899, the Engineer Corps was merged with the Line. Paullin, "A Half Century of Naval Administration in America, 1861-1911, Part XII," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 40 (May, 1914), p. 675.

and Repair, Supplies and Accounts, and Medicine and Surgery. The bureau chiefs who were line officers identified more with their bureaus than they did with the line, and were consequently refractory to any incursions by the General Board in their fields of expertise. The staff corps bureau chiefs felt the same way but, in addition, were suspect of the Board because it represented the line element of the Navy. Secretary of the Navy Long wanted to suppress any internecine quarrels - obviously there existed the potential for many - and therefore warned the Board through Taylor to avoid stepping on the toes of the bureau chiefs. The early Board records do indicate that Taylor and Dewey tried to pay heed to Long's advice, and they therefore took a restrictive view of the Board's mission even though Long's letter of instructions to it encompassed a large area. But Long had placed them on the horns of a tortuous dilemma. How could they on the one hand, deal with the selection of naval bases and coaling stations, and on the other hand, avoid conflict with the Chief of the Bureau of Equipment, Rear Admiral Royal B. Bradford, who had nominal control over such matters? The fact is that they could not. At first, the Board approached the matter gingerly: although it had arrived at positions with respect to bases in the Caribbean and China, it decided not to submit them to Long until he asked for them.[54]

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54. General Board Minutes, April 17, 1900, Vol. 1, p. 5.

When Taylor noticed a trend developing in some of the Board members to get involved in "refereeing" inter-bureau disputes, he expressed concern that not only was the principal work of the Board, war plans, being neglected, but also the Board's existence was being jeopardized. In his words:

> if the Board makes itself the centre of a worthy Genl Staff by means of solid ... plans of war, 'all other things' as the Bible says 'will be added unto us.' We can advise the Sect [Secretary of the Navy] and decide between conflicting bureau chiefs ... but there can be no permanence to that position unless based on that function for which the Board was created, ... plans of war. ... If we drop that business from its high and principal place, we will cease to be of great advisory value, and a change of administration may easily wipe us off the slate.[55]

In 1902 a dispute arose between the Bureau of Navigation and the Board on Construction[56] over the installation of underwater discharge torpedo tubes aboard battleships. Taylor's assistant at the Bureau of Navigation, Commander William S. Cowles[57] asked the General Board to mediate the dispute; the Board refused, stating that it was a matter which the Board on Construction should decide.[58]

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55. Taylor to Dewey, June 22, 1901, Dewey Papers.
56. The Board on Construction was organized in 1889 and consisted of the Chiefs of the Bureau of Construction and Repair, Steam Engineering, Equipment, Ordnance, Yards and Docks, and the Chief Intelligence Officer. It was given the general supervision over the design, construction, and equipping of new ships. Beers, "Office of Naval Operations," Military Affairs, Vol. 10 (Spring, 1946), p. 52.
57. Cowles was President Roosevelt's brother-in-law.
58. Cowles to Dewey, August 25, 1902, General Board File 420-3; Memorandum for the Record signed by Lieutenant Frank Marble, General Board Secretary, February 21, 1903, General Board File 420-3.

This evident concern for bureau sensitivities was not reciprocated. ly in its existence the Board experienced difficulty in acquiring information from the bureaus, necessary to the intelligent prosecution of its planning function. Prospects for voluntary bureau cooperation were not bright so Dewey asked Long to issue instructions which would authorize direct communication between the Board and the bureaus, a practice then current in inter-bureau correspondence.[59] Long refused and directed the Board to channel requests for information through him in order to keep him current.[60] This procedure resulted in long delays, and frequently the Board was not able to forward its recommendations because it could not get substantiating data from the bureaus.[61] In one instance the Board requested that a certain Hydrographic Office chart be kept confidential inasmuch as it pertained to the military reconnaissance of Nimrod Sound in China. The letter was delayed in its circuitous routing and received by the action addressee after the chart had been issued for public distribution.[62]

On other occasions, matters forwarded to the Secretary by the fleet commanders suggesting that they be brought to the attention of the Board, were sidetracked by the bureaus and never seen by the

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59. Dewey to Long, December 19, 1900, General Board File 401-1.
60. Long to Dewey, December 21, 1900, General Board File 401-1.
61. Commander Walter S. Crosley, "The Naval War College, the General Board, and the Office of Naval Intelligence," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 39 (September, 1913), p. 969. Crosley was attached to the Board from 1902 to 1904 and again in 1912 and 1913.
62. Dewey to Secretary of the Navy, General Board File 425-2; Dewey to Secretary of the Navy, July 1, 1904, General Board File 425.

Board. Thus, in 1902, Rear Admiral George C. Remey, Commander o .e Asiatic Fleet, sent the Secretary a report highly critical of the Navy's gunnery marksmanship. Because it reflected on war readiness, he recommended that the Board review it. The document first went to the Bureau of Ordnance whose chief declined to send it on to the Board because, in his view, it involved matters strictly within the purview of the Bureau of Ordnance.[63]

The conflict of jurisdiction between the Board and the bureaus, the jealousy of the latter for the former, and the unwillingness or inability of Secretary Long to maintain firm control led to a serious dispute which nearly terminated the Board's existence, and helped ensure defeat for a movement to expand its stature. As indicated earlier, Rear Admiral Bradford, the Chief of the Bureau of Equipment, was charged with matters relating to the Navy's coaling supplies and coaling stations.[64] Bradford was a controversial figure. He excited few neutral reactions from his naval officer colleagues. One described him as "a bit of a brute," but, "with all his peculiarities ... the most honest and single minded man in the Navy Department - no duty time server."[65] Another characterized him as a "liar" who

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63. Dewey to Secretary of the Navy, June 22, 1904, General Board File 420-11.
64. U.S. Navy Regulations, 1900, (Washington, 1900), article 5(2), p. 13.
65. Sperry to wife, September 7, 1902, Sperry Papers.

"could not be trusted."[66] Because of the intimate connection between coal and war plans, the Board suggested to the Secretary, in June of 1900, that reference be made to it prior to the establishment of any coaling stations in order that it might comment on the site's strategic value.[67] Long replied that Bradford had charge of appropriations for coaling stations and he (Long) did not want any jurisdictional disputes to arise between the bureaus and the Board for otherwise, the latter's "usefulness" might be impaired. He did concede however that the Board had a legitimate interest in the matter and he promised to send Bradford to consult with the members.[68] Bradford met with the Board in August of 1900 and discussed the situation, but it is evident that the conference settled nothing. In mid-1901, Bradford and the Board crossed swords over the question of the use of Dry Tortugas in the Florida Keys as a site for a coaling station. Bradford had for many years urged the use of this location,[69] but the Board took exception because it felt that Tortugas was "incapable of any but imperfect defenses."[70] Bradford challenged Crowninshield, then Chief of the Bureau of Navigation to produce the Board document

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66. Commander T. J. J. See to Congressman Alston G. Dayton, Dayton Papers, University of West Virginia Library.
67. Dewey to Long, June 27, 1900, General Board File 414-1.
68. Long to Dewey, July 24, 1900, General Board File 414.
69. Bradford to Long, April 22, 1901, General Board File 414-3.
70. Commander William S. Cowles to Long, April 24, 1901, General Board File 414-3.

which made that conclusion,[71] and Crowninshield answered that he could not but he knew it was the sense of the Board membership that Dry Tortugas was valueless as a coaling station.[72] Then Crowninshield, on the Board's behalf, invited Bradford to confer once again with the members to argue his case for Tortugas.[73] Bradford, now more incensed than ever, refused the invitation, curtly declaring that the General Board was precluded by its charter from considering the question.[74]

Meanwhile Taylor, greatly concerned that the dispute might give Long cause to abolish the Board or, at least, curtail its activities, assured the Secretary that the two organizations would be able to work out their differences, and reminded him that the Board had enough to do without encroaching on the bureaus' domain.[75] Dewey also sought to persuade Long that "these differences of opinion [were] only natural" and, as a matter of fact, the Board was eager to utilize the wisdom of Bradford's long experience.[76]

Taylor then hit upon a possible solution: he proposed to Dewey that Bradford be made a member of the General Board. Taylor wrote:

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71. Bradford to Crowninshield, June 3, 1901, General Board File 414-3.
72. Crowninshield to Bradford, June 7, 1901, General Board File 414-1.
73. Crowninshield to Bradford, June 22, 1901, General Board File 414-1.
74. Bradford to Crowninshield, June 26, 1901, General Board File 414-1.
75. Taylor to Long, June 8, 1901, Gardner Allen, ed., Papers of John Davis Long, 1897-1904, (Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, Vol. 78), p. 367.
76. Dewey to Long, June 28, 1901, General Board File 414.

there is no reason why the Chief of Equipt. should not be made a member of the Board. His relation to coal supply is sufficient to justify this. It may be that this is the only way to avoid ceaseless opposition, that is to absorb in our own Board, the obstacle which tends to retard our efforts for the good of the service. ... We are not building for ourselves but for the Navy that is to follow us - not for these two or three years, but for the generation to come.[77]

Dewey considered Taylor's proposal a "masterstroke" and he heartily agreed with it.[78] Long also concurred and Bradford reported as a member of the General Board in August of 1901.[79]

John D. Long transferred the Office of the Secretary of the Navy and the Bradford-Board problem to William H. Moody on May 1, 1902. Moody was President Roosevelt's first appointee to the post, Long being a carryover from the McKinley Administration. He adopted a much more sympathetic attitude toward the Board than had his predecessor, prompted in part by the influence of the recently appointed Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, Henry C. Taylor.

Only two months after Moody entered office he dispelled the uncertainty as to the Board's right to comment on the selection of coaling stations by directing it to "take under consideration the subject ... and ... report in full to the Department the recommendations of the Board in regard to them."[80] Despite this clear and

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77. Taylor to Dewey, July 14, 1901, Dewey Papers.
78. Dewey to Taylor, July 17, 1901, Taylor Papers.
79. General Board Minutes, August 20, 1901, Vol. 1, p. 98.
80. Moody to Dewey, July 18, 1902, General Board File 414-1.

authoritative statement, Bradford, even though still a Board member, persisted in his belief that the Board's precept did not legally allow Moody to do what he had done.[81] The unyielding Bradford, obviously defeated in his attempt to preserve intact this key portion of the Bureau of Equipment's empire, finally wrote Moody to say that his many duties as a bureau chief would no longer allow him to attend Board meetings and he withdrew.[82] Bradford was not, however finished with the Board; he would in the months to come deal Taylor a crippling blow in the latter's attempt to enlarge the Board's power and responsibilities.

The General Board fell far short of Taylor's organizational objectives, but it did give him an opening wedge with which to achieve his target - a general staff. He had first to keep the Board alive and prove its usefulness. Confident that he was successful in these endeavors, and encouraged by a sympathetic President Roosevelt, Secretary Moody, and Admiral Dewey, he would begin his move toward the final goal. His patience was not shared by other general staff advocates like Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce; less than two weeks after the Board's first meeting, he urged Taylor to put before Congress a plan to create a Chief of General Staff with the rank of Assistant Secretary,

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81. General Board Minutes, August 26, 1902, Vol. 1, p. 185.
82. Bradford to Moody, October 11, 1902, Serial 65379, Record Group 80, File 11158/28, National Archives.

and fill it with a naval officer who would exercise control over the bureaus.[83] Taylor, more realistic, felt at the time that the development of a general staff was "beyond all expectation"[84] and it would be more prudent to cultivate "the sentiment for higher and better things" and then let the law sanction them.[85] Taylor's evolutionary philosophy was best set forth in a letter to the revolutionist Luce in which he wrote, "long weary tapping is needed before we break through the crust of custom - t'is tedious this 'damnable iteration' - but nothing comes without it."[86] Dewey was, all the while, well aware that Taylor was nurturing the general staff and, in fact, gave his blessing to him.[87]

Taylor's first step was to consolidate the gains thus far achieved and, in June of 1901, he asked Long to seek Congressional sanction for the Board.[88] Long's refusal prompted Taylor to declare that "some further evolution is necessary if this board is to be, as originally contemplated, the nucleus of a great general staff; and something more than an advisory council. ... or the good that has begun will fade before fruition."[89] Taylor enlisted Dewey's support

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83. Taylor to Luce, May 3, 1900, Luce Papers.
84. Taylor to Luce, March 4, 1901, Luce Papers.
85. Taylor to Luce, May 3, 1900, Luce Papers.
86. Taylor to Luce, April 8, 1902, Luce Papers.
87. Dewey to Taylor, undated but circa February, 1901, Dewey Papers.
88. Taylor to Long, June 8, 1901, Long Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, Vol. 78, p. 367.
89. Taylor to Long, August 12, 1901, Long Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society Collection, Vol. 78, p. 387.

for a scheme to create, within the Bureau of Navigation, a general staff which would not supplant the General Board, but be in a position to effectuate its policies.[90] Again Long demurred, stating that he was "disinclined to such action both in the interest of the continued good work of the Board, and especially of that simplicity of departmental organization ... which ... should be increased rather than diminished."[91] Taylor traced Long's reluctance to the Board's dispute with Bradford, but it was also due to his distaste for anything connected with a general staff.[92] Dewey's impression, received in a conversation he had with Long, was that the Secretary would act eventually, but he did not consider just then an opportune time. Dewey revealed to Taylor that Long said, "if we waited, everything would come to us."[93] Nothing did come during Long's tenure of office. His successor, William H. Moody, would now be tested.

Taylor had not neglected the importance of the Navy's staunch supporter in the White House, Theodore Roosevelt. In April of 1902 he had prepared a memorandum for him on the necessity of a general staff for the Navy, but apparently decided to forward it over Dewey's famous signature.[94] In this document, the old arguments were

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90. Dewey to Long, June 28, 1901, General Board File 401.
91. Long to Dewey, July 10, 1901, General Board File 401.
92. Chapter I, p. 19; Taylor to Dewey, July 14, 1901, Dewey Papers.
93. Dewey to Taylor, July 17, 1901, Taylor Papers.
94. Taylor to Luce, April 8, 1902, Luce Papers.

re-stated: the Germans and Japanese have General Staffs, so should the U.S. Navy; the General Board was a start but it lacked executorial teeth; modern warfare demands advance preparation and only a general staff can ensure it.[95] Roosevelt, predictably, thought the Dewey argument worthy of congratulation and "conclusive."[96]

By February of 1903, Secretary Moody had made his decision to support the introduction of legislation looking to the formation of a general staff. Many obstacles had to be overcome, the first and foremost being formidable congressional resistance. The most outspoken opponent in the Congress was Senator Eugene Hale. He had told Moody that as long as he remained in the Senate, no general staff bill would ever become law.[97] Hale's motives were mixed; some practical, some ideal. His pacific sensibilities were injured by the imperialistic venture of 1898, and since the Navy was the primary tool of the imperialists, he wished to dull its edge, physically and organizationally. President Roosevelt thought that his pacifism and animosity toward the military would actually invite war.[99] Undoubtedly

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95. Dewey to Roosevelt, June 3, 1902, General Board File 401.
96. Roosevelt to Dewey, June 4, 1902, General Board File 401.
97. Taylor to Luce, February 13, 1903, Luce Papers. One General Board officer reported that "General Staff matters are booming as far as the President and Secretary are concerned and the only man we have to kill is Hale and I think we can kill him." Commander William J. Barnette to Luce, July 9, 1903, Luce Papers.
98. Elting E. Morison, Admiral Sims and the Modern American Navy, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1942), p. 181.
99. Roosevelt to Melville Stone, July 26, 1907, Elting E. Morison, ed., The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), Vol. 5, p. 728.

these ideological factors contributed in a large way to Hale's position, but he was also a close ally of Bradford, the Board nemesis. Both were from the State of Maine; Hale had been part owner of some land in that State which, with Bradford's cooperation, was sold to the Navy Department and became the Frenchman's Bay coal depot. The deal created suspicions, at least in the mind of Moody, of undue influence.[100]

The principal antagonist in the House Naval Affairs Committee was not the Chairman, but Congressman Alston G. Dayton of West Virginia. He was considered the "real leader" of the Committee.[101] Dayton was on close terms with Bradford and Rear Admiral George Melville, Chief of the Bureau of Steam Engineering, also in the anti-Board faction. Dayton had promised Bradford that he would support him for the prestigious Bureau of Navigation job and Melville offered to "take some active steps" to enhance Dayton's quest for a federal judgeship, because of the latter's service to the Engineer Corps.[102] Another influential member of the House Naval Affairs Committee was John F. Rixey. He too was adamantly opposed to the General Board and the

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100. Sperry to wife, November 21, 1902, Sperry Papers. Sperry told his wife that because of the sale, Moody considered Hale a "jobber." Seward W. Livermore, "American Naval Development 1898-1914, With Special Reference to Foreign Affairs," (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1943), p. 24.
101. Lieutenant Commander William S. Sims, handwritten description of Dayton on the back of a letter, Dayton to Sims, March 28, 1904, Sims Papers. Sims was an astute observer of, and participant in, the Washington scene during the period of this study. Morison, Admiral Sims.
102. Bradford to Dayton, May 6, 1904, Dayton Papers; Melville to Dayton, June 15, 1901, Dayton Papers.

general staff, and was undoubtedly disposed in that direction by his brother, Surgeon General Presley M. Rixey, Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.

Congressional preference for the bureau system was based not only on the distaste for a germanic system of administration, but also because Congress could maintain considerable control over the Navy Department. The bureaus spoke as many voices and with many budget requests, most of which would effect local economies. Bureau chiefs were also appointed to four year terms subject to confirmation by the Senate, and were hard to remove once ensconced without embarrassment to the Executive. All of this tended toward an alliance of mutual interest with Congress and an independence from the Secretary which, was vastly different from current practice. On the other hand, the General Board controlled no funds, had no favors to dispense, and would hardly support large expenditures for a navy yard in Senator Hale's home State if it did not square with its strategic program.

The prospects for a general staff were indeed dismal, but Taylor and company began their crusade. Luce was asked to use his influence "with ... pen and with the politicians."[103] A pamphlet containing articles in support of a general staff by such luminaries as

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103. Commander William J. Barnette to Luce, September 26, 1903, Luce Papers.

Roosevelt, Dewey, Luce, Taylor, and Alfred T. Mahan was [illegible]

support the "campaign of education."[104] The members of the House Naval Affairs Committee were wined, dined, and briefed aboard the Secretary's yacht, Dolphin.[105] President Roosevelt was asked and agreed to endorse the general staff measure in this annual message to Congress.[106] Moody even considered reducing the size of the Board to demphasize, in the mind of Congress, its threat to the bureau structure.[107] The War College was directed to forward a summary of instances in military history where good war plans gained victory and improper plans or no plans at all ensured defeat.[108] Commander William J. Barnette used his contacts on the New York Herald to publish an editorial which, in vituperative language, took Congressman orge E. Foss, Chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, to task for opposing a bill which would have equalized the pay of Army and Navy officers. He then wrote Congressman Dayton, a Foss opponent, enclosing the editorial, and explaining that he had asked

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104. Barnette to Luce, September 16, 1903, Luce Papers; "Circular for the Information of Officers," dated 1903, General Board File 446.
105. Barnette to Luce, July 28, 1903, Luce Papers. Barnette, a member of the General Board reported optimistically but erroneously that the "Naval Committee of the house...[had] swung into line."
106. Israel, ed. The State of the Union Messages of the Presidents, 1790-1966, Vol. 3, p. 2096.
107. Rear Admiral French E. Chadwick to Dayton, February 15, 1904, Dayton Papers.
108. Sperry to Taylor, February 24, 1904, Naval War College Archives.

the Herald to "swat" Foss.[109] Finally, Moody and Taylor included in their annual reports strong criticisms of the bureau system, and equally strong recommendations for some form of general staff.[110]

The opposing bureaus lost no time in presenting their "case." Seizing on the General Board practice of meeting at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, during the summer months, they mocked the Board as "a pleasant place for those who wish to winter in Washington and summer in Newport."[111] However devoid of truth, this charge was so effective that Moody and Taylor prevailed on Dewey to cancel the Newport sessions for the summer of 1903, even though some of the members, and most of the records, were already there.[112]

Bradford, in an attempt to counter Moody's and Taylor's pleas for a general staff in their annual reports, issued a scathing attack on the activities of the Board and on Moody's administration of the Department. Characteristically, he opened with a statement of concern not for the Navy but for the Bureau of Equipment. He claimed that the General Board had violated its instructions and

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109. Barnette to Dayton, April 2, 1904, with clipping from New York Herald, April 2, 1904, Dayton Papers. Congressional hearings on the General Board/general staff bill began nine days later.
110. Report of the Secretary of the Navy, November 23, 1903, Annual Reports of the Navy Department for the Year 1903, (Washington, 1903), pp. 3-5; Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, October 1, 1903, Ibid., pp. 498-499.
111. Taylor to Dewey, June 27, 1903, Dewey Papers.
112. Ibid.; Taylor to Luce, July 23, 1903, Luce Papers; General Board Minutes, July 28, 1903, Vol. 1, p. 321.

involved itself with bureau business. In a direct affront to Moody, he wrote, "after an experience of six years in the Department, the Chief of the Bureau [of Equipment] believes that it is the administration of the Deprtment that needs attention, rather than its organization, particularly in the direction of expenditure of money and in confining the subordinates of the Department to their legitimate duties."[113]

Taylor wanted to avoid the use of ad hominem argumentation and keep the debate on a high plane. While he estimated that the opponents had "ten times the influence with Congress...and ten times the power with the press," he also realized that resort to bitter rhetoric and personal attacks would leave an indelible scar on the Navy's body politic, "smell bad a year or two later," and alienate Congress for many years to come. He was anticipating defeat in the short term, but hoped for victory in the long run. "I have impressed my ideas about using proper and large methods upon my colleagues and subordinates," he wrote Luce, "and we are all now prepared to go ahead in a deliberate and dignified manner, but at the same time with a sustained energy and persistence."[114]

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113. Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Equipment, September 17, 1903, Annual Reports of the Navy Department, p. 390; Bradford to Dayton, January 13, 1904, Dayton Papers.
114. Taylor to Luce, September 11, 1903, Luce Papers.

At this juncture Taylor had two plans in mind: the maximum program called for Congressional authorization of a full general staff and a chief of staff with control over the bureaus in the areas of fleet logistics, ships, ship characteristics, force levels, and naval bases; the bureaus would be reduced to a support function only.[115] The General Board would be abolished, and in its place a "General Council" would be formed to advise the Secretary on "broad policy matters."[116] The minimum goal was to get Congress to recognize the General Board legislatively, and to provide for a "chief of staff" to the Secretary; this scheme did not provide for either a general staff or direct reduction of bureau power; the chief of staff would be selected from among the General Board members.[117] The climate a Congress indicated that there would be no chance at all for the maximum program, and so little for the minimum program, that Taylor was tempted to abandon all effort.[118] Moody elected to move forward with the minimum program, and requested Congress

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115. Taylor, "The Fleet," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 29 (December, 1903), p. 806.
116. Taylor, "Memorandum on the Necessity of a General Staff and the Method of Supplying It," undated but circa October 1903, General Board File 401.
117. U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Naval Affairs, Hearings on H.R. 15403 for a General Board, 58th Cong., 2nd sess., House Report No. 146, bound in Hearings before the Committee on Naval Affairs, House of Representatives, Appropriation Bill for 1905 Subjects and on H.R. 15403, for General Board. (Washington, 1904), hereafter referred to as General Board Hearings, p. 912; Taylor to Moody, April 10, 1904, William H. Moody Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
118. Taylor to Moody, April 10, 1904, Moody Papers.

to pass implementing legislation.

It was absolutely essential that Dewey testify enthusiastically in favor of the measure; without his support the bill didn't stand a chance. Taylor wanted the Secretary to persuade Dewey to take the Chief of Staff position because, if his name were associated with the measure in that fashion, Congress might be reluctant to defeat the proposal and thus disparage the popular Admiral.[119] Dewey balked; not only did he not want the job, but he also objected to the phrase, "chief of staff" because of the odium which critics had generated for it and the term, "general staff."[120] Finally, after a series of hurried conferences between Taylor, Dewey, and Moody, it was agreed to change the title to "military adviser,"[121] and Dewey promised both Taylor and Moody that he would support their plan in full.[122]

The House Naval Affairs Committee hearings began on April 11, 1904 and, during the ensuing two weeks, testimony was received from twelve Navy Department witnesses. Of the eight bureau chiefs who testified, only two were in absolute agreement with the bill, Taylor and Rear Admiral Henry N. Manney, Chief of the Bureau of Equipment.[123] Rear Admiral George A. Converse, a line officer

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119. Taylor to Moody, April 10, 1904, Moody Papers.
120. Ibid.
121. Taylor to Dewey, undated but circa April, 1904, Dewey Papers.
122. Taylor to Moody, April 10, 1904, Moody Papers.
123. Bradford left for sea duty in October of 1903, not as part of a plot by Moody and Taylor to prevent him from testifying, but because he was long overdue for such an assignment. Besides, his views were well known through his contacts with Dayton and Hale.

and Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, told the Committee that he thought the General Board was too large and, while he would interpose no strong objection to the bill, he was concerned that its passage might permit a future Secretary to place an expansive interpretation on the Board's mission.[124] Brigadier General George F. Elliot, Commandant of the Marine Corps, said he would support the measure only if Marine Corps representation were guaranteed.[125] Rear Admiral Charles W. Rae, Chief of the Bureau of Steam Engineering, nominally a line officer, but really identifying more with the old Engineer Corps, joined the other staff corps bureau chiefs in a unanimous and adamant rejection of the scheme.[126] The one common thread unifying their testimony was the fear that the role of the bureaus would be narrowed if the bill were to become law.[127]

Moody sought to destroy the arguments of his subordinates and antagonists by pledging that the General Board would not be the instrument for reducing the civilian control of the Navy,[128] nor would it "supervise the operations of the bureaus ...."[129] He related that he had offered the job of military adviser to Dewey, but he had refused because he was not prepared to undertake such a strenuous

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124. General Board Hearings, pp. 954-955.
125. Ibid., pp. 989-991.
126. Ibid., pp. 946-991.
127. Ibid., pp. 946-949.
128. Ibid., pp. 912, 918.
129. Ibid., p. 913.

assignment at his advanced age (66 years).[130] He explained that the bill added to his powers in only one respect, and that was the creation of the position of military adviser, with a rank superior to any other rear admiral. In other provisions, it either confirmed what the Secretary had already done, or limited his powers insofar as it detailed the maximum number of officers who could be assigned to the Board, and specified the length of their tours of duty.[131] Moody favored these last two restraints in order to:

> quiet the solicitude - expressed not only in committees and in Congress, but in the service itself - that the General Board may develop into a large body of officers who gradually may accumulate for themselves great power in the administration of the Navy and great power over the fortunes of the individual officers of the Navy, and that thereby there shall be created a military oligarchy here at Washington .... With this provision enacted into law that can never be. The body will be small. It must be representative. It must soon resolve again into its elements, which will return to their duties, either at sea or on land.[132]

It was no surprise that Taylor strongly favored the bill. He summed up his feelings this way:

> If the General Board were authorized by Congress, it would put the military management of the fleet upon the same ground ... as is now occupied by the bureaus in their relations to the Secretary. The opponents of this measure fear

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130. General Board Hearings, pp. 914, 938. Taylor was Moody's second choice. Ibid., p. 917.
131. Ibid., p. 912-913.
132. Ibid., p. 913.

> that it will produce bad results. I do not agree with them; but so great is the Navy's need that I respectfully urge the committee to take that risk rather than to leave the Secretary of the Navy with no authorized advice upon the questions now become vital to the Navy and the country in case of war.[133]

The testimony of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Charles H. Darling reveals, as nothing else could, just how fantastic a menagerie was the Navy Department of 1904. Here was an appointee of President Roosevelt, owing allegiance to the Executive and particularly to the Secretary of the Navy, and yet appearing before the House Naval Affairs Committee and condemning the General Board in stronger language than that used by the bureau chiefs.[134] Darling stated that his opposition was well known to Moody and was offered with the latter's "knowledge and consent."[135] Darling disapproved of the measure for three reasons: it would make the Secretary an "ornamental figurehead;" it would promote militarism; and it would be superfluous since the "military element of the Navy Department already [had] all the power and all the influence it ought to have," either in the field of departmental administration or in the matter of congressional recommendations.[136] Moreover, Darling favored restricting the Board's duties rather than enlarging them as Moody intended. He criticized the Board for inflating its mission and for

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133. General Board Hearings, p. 952.
134. Ibid., pp. 927-935.
135. Ibid., p. 927.
136. Ibid., p. 927.

carrying out duties of no tactical or strategical import. He concluded with the warning that the bill really authorized a general staff, an "old world idea" not in consonance with the American system of government.[137]

Interestingly enough, just four months before this testimony, Darling wrote Dewey and asked that the General Board concern itself not only with the preparation of plans but also their manner of execution. In his view, the "necessity for the constant cooperation of the General Board with the Department has become marked as of late."[138]

The House Naval Affairs Committee had heard enough. So complete was the defeat of Taylor's plan that the Congressmen didn't even dignify it with a Committee report. While Darling's testimony was not the sole contributing factor, it gave vivid evidence of how hopeless were Taylor's chances for success. The antipathy within the Navy Department and Congress was too overwhelming. The balance of power lay with those who favored the bureau system.

Taylor accepted the rout with equanimity. Brushing aside Luce's suggestion that the Secretary do by executive fiat what Congress refused to do, he wrote:

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137. General Board Hearings, pp. 934-935.
138. Darling to Dewey, January 4, 1904, General Board File 401.

> as to being defeated, we certainly have not gained what we want, but I should not consider it a defeat until Congress passed some law which would prevent our trying to improve things. We have been afraid of that, and with reason. ... We have not had to fall back any yet, and do not doubt that by continuing as we are going now we shall, in a few years, obtain what we want and obtain it in the right way.[139]

Taylor was right. None of the General Board adversaries dared go so far as to suggest the disestablishment of Dewey's Board. Its existence, however dependent on the whim of a future Secretary, was confirmed, and even its most bitter critics admitted its value.

Rear Admiral Henry C. Taylor died on July 26, 1904 and the Taylor era ended. A little more than one year earlier, in an appraisal of the General Board, he wrote:

> It is of course a little ragged in its workings as a General Staff, it having no official status but it is gradually being recognized as such, and is used effectively by those who wish to better the Navy and heartily opposed by those who wish the old order preserved. ...You perceive there is nothing very triumphant in this statement, and in truth there is not the amount of success for which we make great parade and blow trumpets, but in certain ways I am heartily satisfied with the present results ... even if I should leave it tomorrow.[140]

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139. Taylor to Luce, June 29, 1904, Luce Papers.
140. Taylor to Luce, February 13, 1903, Luce Papers.

CHAPTER III

THE BOARD, THE BUREAUS, AND THE INSURGENTS, 1904 - 1914

After Taylor's death in 1904 the General Board achieved a degree of recognition and permanence which it had never enjoyed while he was alive. But without his leadership, the line began to split into two factions: those who favored retaining the Board as the principal voice of the seagoing officers; and a group of insurgents who still saw it as an evolutionary mutation in the growth towards an all-powerful general staff. Their actions added a new dimension to the continuing turmoil and disunity within the Navy Department. Relative calm came in 1909 thanks to strong secretarial leadership, but it proved to be only a cease-fire. Four years later, the struggle was renewed, and it led to the Board's loss of the function for which it was founded - war planning.

As noted in Chapter II, one of Taylor's aims was to acquire sufficient approbation for the Board to ensure its survival from bureau attacks and to permit it to speak with the voice of authority. The 1904 hearings failed to do this but the disappointment was short-lived. During the hearings, Admiral Dewey, in response to a request by the House Naval Affairs Committee, submitted a list of duties which the

Board would perform if the bill then under consideration were to become law. It had been drafted by Rear Admiral Taylor,[1] and included all of those functions which were contained in Secretary John D. Long's letter of March 29, 1900 plus the following: determination of level of war reserve supplies, fleet logistics requirements, manpower needs; advising on naval operations, maneuvers, tactics, organization, and training; coordination of the work of the Naval War College and the Office of Naval Intelligence.[2] There was nothing surprising about this list; the Board had been doing these things for many years. Its significance lies in the fact that Taylor wanted to codify the Board's practice, for the guidance of the bureaus, and to use as a shield to prevent future attacks of the Bradford pattern. At the time, the Board's duties had not even been included in the Navy's bible, "Navy Regulations," which spelled out in considerable detail the functions and inter-relationships of the several Navy Department components.

Taylor's successor as Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, Rear Admiral George A. Converse, suggested in October of 1904 that the General Board should be formally recognized as a "permanent

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1. Memorandum from Rear Admiral Henry C. Taylor to Admiral George Dewey, April 19, 1904, Dewey Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
2. U.S., Congress, House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on H.R. 15403 for a General Board, 58th Cong., 2nd sess., House Report No. 146, bound in Hearings before the Committee on Naval Affairs, House of Representatives, Appropriation Bill for 1905 Subjects and on H.R. 15403, for General Board, (Washington, 1904), p. 936.

element of the Navy Department."[3] Secretary of the Navy, Paul Morton, William H. Moody's successor, concurred and the Navy Regulations published in June of 1905 gave to the General Board a stature, permanence, and legitimacy far exceeding that accorded to it in the early days.[4] Since the regulations were approved by the President, the members deemed the action most significant to the future of the Board.[5] It gave the members a sense of independence never enjoyed in the early years. They were now in a position to remind the bureaus whenever they failed to refer to the Board those matters properly coming under its cognizance. Thus, the Secretary was told that the Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks should not have submitted a budget request for facilities at San Juan harbor without consulting the Board. His action was deemed inconsistent with the long-held conviction that spending priority should go to the base at Guantanamo.[6]

Three weeks before Taylor died, he met with President Roosevelt, Secretary Moody and Admiral Dewey and told them that if Congress did not authorize some "superior direction of the fleet,"

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3. Annual Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, October 17, 1904, Annual Reports of the Navy Department, 1904, (Washington, 1904), pp. 468-469.
4. Regulations for the Government of the U.S. Navy, 1905, (Washington, 1905), p. 19.
5. Rear Admiral Charles S. Sperry to son Charles, May 12, 1905, Sperry Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
6. Dewey to Secretary of the Navy (hereafter cited as Secnav), October 28, 1905, General Board File 404.

the administration should "discourage the building of more fighting ships." He was convinced that without a general staff, and in the event of war, the ships would be easily captured by the enemy and, although the Navy "would fight and die bravely ... [its] history would be full of heroic defeats; but they would be defeats still, and the country would be humiliated...."[7]

This was Taylor's legacy but who would carry on? His death "left the Navy without a leader."[8] Dewey was getting well on in years, was not in the best of health, and did not want to invest his prestige and popularity in what was a very unpopular movement.[9] He wanted to avoid the airing of controversial questions in the public forum.[10] It is true that he had supported Taylor's endeavors, but principally because of the great trust he had in him, and now that Taylor was gone, he was unwilling to transfer this confidence to other members of the general staff movement. While his health declined, his prestige did not; even as late as 1913 Dewey was able to get a

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7. Taylor to Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce, June 29, 1904, Luce Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
8. Rear Admiral Bradley A. Fiske, From Midshipman to Rear Admiral, (New York: The Century Co., 1919), p. 371.
9. Dewey to son George, March 24, 1904, Dewey Papers, Division of Naval History, Washington, D. C.
10. He told the author who "ghosted" his autobiography, Frederic Palmer, to "soften the truth" about his confrontation with the Germans at Manila Bay in order to avoid a renascence of the rancor which this episode had provoked when it occurred. Palmer to Dewey, February 6, 1912 and June 12, 1912, Dewey Papers.

Congressman assigned to the important House Naval Affairs Committee.[11]

In addition to these supporting factors, Dewey did not believe in a general staff. This is not to say that he did not see room for improvement in the Navy's organization; he made many proposals to this effect including one which would have replaced the bureaus with three offices: financial, military, and technical with an operating head over each reporting to the Secretary.[12] But he thought the General Board was better than any general staff system and he once called it the "best General Naval Staff in the world,"[13] and "superior to the Army General Staff organization."[14]

Whether Dewey's distaste for the general staff was based wholly, partially, or not at all on concern for the loss of stature it would bring for him and the General Board, is unclear. However, one of his descriptions of the general staff modus operandi reveals less than a clear understanding of its function. Dewey was quoted as saying: "If you have a general staff, and you give it administrative as well as advisory powers, you get too many officers each of whom has the right to issue orders, and in the end there is no final authority."[15]

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11. Congressman Peter F. Gerry to Dewey, June 3, 1913, Dewey Papers.
12. Dewey to Secnav, November 16, 1906, General Board File 446.
13. Dewey to Congressman Lemuel Padgett, April 3, 1913, Dewey Papers.
14. Dewey to Josephus Daniels, March 5, 1915, General Board File 446.
15. New York Herald, September 22, 1905, Dewey's Scrapbook, Dewey Papers.

His opposition, if not his understanding, was shared by another prominent naval officer and member of the General Board, Rear Admiral Charles S. Sperry. He wrote:

> it is commonly said that the army general staff is doing administrative work in matters of material instead of confining itself to giving military advice and making plans for the handling of the army in war. An attempt was made to procure a similar establishment for the navy but I am pleased to say it failed. The General Board lets questions of material alone most wisely and handles only military questions or such as require the cooperation of several bureaus.[16]

But who would see to it that the bureaus cooperated? Not the General Board; it was limited to advice and could not require the bureaus to act. The only coordinating element was the Secretary himself.

President Roosevelt had no less than six Secretaries in a little over seven years. Yet one who had some naval experience prior to becoming Secretary, believed that no "man can understand the Navy Department in less than two years of continuous, earnest application."[17] Secretary of the Navy Victor H. Metcalf, who spent a large part of his tenure away from Washington, was reluctant to tackle the Navy's organizational problems because he would be in office only a short time, and he did not wish to stir up "strife."[18] Dewey

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16. Sperry to son Charles, February 22, 1906, Sperry Papers.
17. Testimony of Secretary Truman H. Newberry, February 1, 1909, U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Naval Affairs, Methods of Conducting Business and Departmental Changes, 60th Cong., 2nd sess., Senate Doc. No. 693, (Washington, 1909), p. 22.
18. Luce to Rear Admiral Willard H. Brownson, August 22, 1907, Luce Papers. Draft copy with notation, "never sent," but in which Luce records conversation he had with Metcalf.

described the Secretaryship during Roosevelt's administration as a "kaleidoscopic post . . .; no one remains there long enough to become conversant with the duties of the office or to make himself in the least identified with the ideas, aims, necessities or customs of the service."[19] Secretary of the Navy Charles J. Bonaparte, a descendant of Napoleon I, inspired little confidence; he admitted that the position required "a man who is interested in his work and has some force of character to keep these autonomous Bureaus in due subordination and, . . . to retain control. . . ."[20] But he delegated most of his functions to his assistant, was not considered to be a "hustler," and was seldom at his office.[21]

Attempts were made by Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce to interest Dewey and the Board in general staff measures but without success, even though they were offered with the assurance that they

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19. Dewey to Brownson, October 26, 1906, Dewey Papers. Although he described the situation as "unsatisfactory," he also indicated that Roosevelt's "intense interest...in naval matters" was a "redeeming point."
20. Bonaparte to Roosevelt, September 8, 1906, Bonaparte Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
21. Dewey to Captain Nathan Sargent, December 26, 1905 and June 5, 1906, Dewey Papers. As one competent student of American naval policy has said:

    > The short-term Secretaries usually do little more than learn the routine of their office, render a few decisions at the bidding of their subordinates, and vex, through lack of knowledge or misplaced zeal, the already troubled waters of the Navy. Charles O. Paullin, "A Half Century of Naval Administration, 1861-1911, Part VII," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 39 (September, 1913), p. 1247.

would strengthen the Board's position.[22] One observer, Park Benjamin, told Luce that the "General Staff movement was dead," and that Secretary Paul Morton considered the General Board as meeting "all necessities."[23] Benjamin was wrong; the movement wasn't dead, it had gone underground.

Ironically, the reformers came from Dewey's own organization, the General Board. All of them, Captain William J. Barnette, Captain William Swift, and Lieutenant Commander Philip Andrews, received succor from Admiral Luce, and none of them felt bound to use the "proper and large methods" which Taylor had advocated.[24] Beginning in late 1905, these insurgents began their undercover campaign ("plot" would perhaps better describe their method). Warning that "publicity would be fatal," Barnette unfolded their plan to Luce. The Secretary would be persuaded to relieve the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation of his many details and assign them to his assistant. He would thus become a de facto chief of staff with responsibility under the Secretary for war preparation. Later, a clause would be inserted in the Naval Appropriation Bill authorizing the Secretary to "assign to the Asst. Chief of Bu. [Bureau of Navigation] such duties as the exigencies of the service may require." The General Board would remain but the Chief of the Bureau of

22. Luce to Dewey, March 27, 1905, General Board File 446.
23. Benjamin to Luce, April 25, 1905.
24. Taylor to Luce, September 11, 1903, Luce Papers.

Navigation would be in a position to control it because of his release from the bondage of detail which encumbered previous Chiefs. Dewey's status would remain unchanged. Captain Barnette described their scheme to Luce, writing:

> I want to make clear to you again that my plan presumes the status quo so far as Dewey is concerned (unfortunately) but when he is unable to perform further duty, (may that be soon) then the Chief of BuNav comes into his own. Dewey, so long as he acts, will of course be the President of the G. B. [General Board] but the Chief of BuNav has the power and is therefore the executive head....[25]

Barnette then went on to ask Luce to go to the President and obtain his approval for only he could "coerce" the principal obstacle to legislation of the sort described, Senator Eugene Hale.[26] Whether Luce did or not is unknown, but in any event nothing came of the plan.

Several months later the idea was resurrected but with some interesting new twists. Again an amendment would be attached to the Naval Appropriation Bill to allow the assistants to the Chief of the Bureaus of Navigation, Equipment, Construction and Repair, and Yards and Docks to "transact such duties of their respective Bureaus as the Secretary may direct." The last three were included only to mask the real intention: to free the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation from his day to day routine so that he could "devote his time to

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25. Barnette to Luce, October 15, 1905, Luce Papers.
26. Ibid.

the larger questions," and "execute the will of the General Board of which he will be Head when Dewey steps down ...." Then, in Barnette's view, the insurgents would be well on their way to achieving their goal, power to control the bureaus.[27]

They were quite sanguine about success; Barnette indicated that he had assurances from the Chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, George E. Foss, that Senator Hale would cooperate because the former had "helped Hale get an assistant to the BuEngr [Bureau of Engineering] as a personal favor."[28] A few days later, Barnette updated Luce:

> nothing must be done and no move made in any direction until after the naval appropriation has passed both houses with the amendment attached. Foss has to play the game for me and you know he is a very slippery proposition. Please remember that no one but yourself and Andrews [Lieutenant Commander Philip Andrews, assigned to the General Board's First Committee] knows what is really behind the innocent little amendment not even Cowles [Rear Admiral William S. Cowles, President Roosevelt's brother-in-law and Chief of the Bureau of Equipment]....[29]

Barnette's optimism did not prove justified. Hale remained true to his long-held antipathy toward a general staff to which he related "like a red rag to a bull."[30] President Roosevelt was unable

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27. Barnette to Luce, May 3, 1906, Luce Papers.
28. Ibid.
29. Barnette to Luce, May 16, 1906, Luce Papers.
30. Luce to Dr. W. Wharton Hollingsworth, May 4, 1906, Luce Papers.

or unwilling to exercise his influence to bring him around,[31] and nally Dewey's support, so essential to success, was just not available.[32]

The stormy Bureau-Board relationships which marked the first four years of the General Board's existence continued. While the particulars of contention changed, the fundamental causes did not. Now the chief issue would be the design of ships; the disputants were the General Board on the one hand and the Bureau of Construction and Repair and the Board on Construction on the other.

Secretary Long's letter of instructions to the General Board called for it to "give its attention to .... the numbers and kinds of ships needed for the maintenance of ... power ...."[33] The Navy Regulations of 1905 authorized it to "consider the number and types of ships proper to constitute the fleet...."[34] The Board found that its advice could not be limited to ship numbers and general categories but necessarily involved the military characteristics of the ships. The term "battleship" or "cruiser" meant little unless amplified with a description of displacement, armament, speed, armor, and so on. Therefore the Board, in support of its war planning function, felt constrained to provide the Secretary with counsel on such matters,

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31. Luce to Dr. W. Wharton Hollingsworth, May 4, 1906, Luce Papers.
32. Barnette to Luce, December 15, 1905, Luce Papers.
33. Long to Dewey, March 30, 1900, General Board File 401.
34. Navy Regulations, 1905, p. 19.

and, in doing so, it came into conflict with a bureau and an inter-bureau agency which had been advising the Secretary on the same matters.

The bureau was the Bureau of Construction and Repair. Led by a staff corps officer, it was charged with "all that relates to designing, building, fitting, and repairing the hulls of ships...."[35] The inter-bureau agency was the Board on Construction. Its membership included the Chiefs of the Bureaus of Equipment, Ordnance, Construction and Repair, and Steam Engineering and it was organized in 1889 to provide the Secretary with professional advice on the Navy's shipbuilding programs.[36] The officers from the Bureau of Construction and Repair, called Naval Constructors, dominated this Board principally because they were regarded as the only ones who were professionally qualified to address the complicated problems of warship design; but, in the view of many of the line officers, they planned the ships not with the user in mind, but in accordance with their own concepts, borne of too much theory and too little practicality.[37] Some of the bureau chiefs on the Board on Construction were in fact line officers but they were so busy conducting their own affairs that they did not have time to devote a large effort

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35. Navy Regulations, 1905, p. 15.
36. Navy Regulations, 1905, p. 458.
37. Rear Admiral Bradley A. Fiske to Commander William S. Sims, February 25, 1905, Sims Papers, Division of Naval History, Washington, D. C.

to what they considered a peripheral activity. Rear Admiral Charles O'Neil, for seven years the President of the Board on Construction, admitted that ship design procedures needed changing and agreed that the members didn't have time to go into necessary detail. This produced an attitude of conservatism - an unwillingness to experiment.[38] No wonder then that a member of this Board, when asked by a line officer why he opposed turbines for new battleships, replied: "Because I know what reciprocating engines can do, and I'm not taking risks with any improvements. If you fellows [the line] can get Congress to assume the risk, I'll build the turbines."[39] Not surprising either was the response of the Board on Construction when it was told that two battleships under construction had serious design deficiencies which substantially affected their capability. It agreed but added that the "designs were prepared many years ago, ... and to institute extensive changes, would involve the Government in serious complications as to contractual obligations."[40]

As in the case of naval base policy, the General Board entered the field of shipbuilding with considerable caution. It voiced concern to Secretary Long in October of 1900 that the Navy's programs, expressed in the Board on Construction recommendations, were

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38. Attachment "B" to letter Dewey to Secnav, May 28, 1906, General Board File 420.
39. Handwritten comment by Sims on back of a letter from A. T. Bowles to Truman H. Newberry, December 16, 1908, copy in Sims Papers.
40. Board on Construction endorsement, attached to letter Dewey to Secnav, May 28, 1906, General Board File 420.

asymetrical and would lead to overconstruction of battleships and underconstruction of cruisers, gunboats, destroyers, and auxiliaries.[41] Beginning in October of 1903, the Board began to include not only numbers and kinds of ships but also their characteristics including sustained speed, steaming radius, armament, armor, freeboard, and displacement.[42] The naval constructors and the Board on Construction took affront at this challenge to their previously exclusive domain and criticized the General Board's ship desiderata as unreal.[43] Confronted with this dilemma, the Secretary, William H. Moody, decided to use the General Board's suggestions as to the numbers and types of ships but still relied on the design professionals for the characteristics. Another Secretary, Charles J. Bonaparte, infuriated the General Board members by submitting their recommendations to the Board on Construction and then accepting the latter's advice on the extent to which they should be carried out.[44] In the opinion of the General Board this procedure vitiated "one of the chief objects for which...[it] was organized" and tended to "continue the uncertainty as to what building program the Department should recommend to Congress."[45]

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41. Dewey to Secnav, October 12, 1900, General Board File 420-2.
42. Dewey to Secnav, October 17, 1903, General Board File 420-2.
43. Rear Admiral Charles O'Neil, President, Board on Construction to Secnav, November 27, 1903, General Board File 420-2.
44. U.S., Congress, House Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Estimates Submitted by the Secretary of the Navy, 1906, 59th Cong., 1st sess., House Doc. No. 123, (Washington, 1906), p. 1119.
45. Dewey to Secnav, February 16, 1907, General Board File 401.

Several incidents reinforced the Board's conviction that line officers should have a "controlling voice in the character and qualities of the instruments with which they have to deal."[46] In March of 1904, the Board told the Secretary that the ammunition hoists in battleship turrets were so constructed as to permit hot powder to fall directly down to the powder handling rooms, possibly causing fire or explosion.[47] Two weeks later, a turret explosion occurred in U. S. S. Missouri, and burning powder fell from the barbette to the handling room, spreading the fire, and contributing to the deaths of five officers and twenty-five men.[48] In the face of this, the Board on Construction defended the design because it had nothing "on file" to reflect criticism on the system of direct hoists. Nothing was done, and again in April of 1906, a similar episode took place in U. S. S. Kearsage, and the death and destruction were once more exacerbated by the direct path from the gun turret to the handling room.[49]

The General Board made two general suggestions for improvement. One was to strip the Board on Construction of its duties and transfer them to a "Board on Designs" composed of two civilian naval

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46. Dewey to Secnav, January 28, 1909, General Board File 446.
47. Dewey to Secnav, March 31, 1904, General Board File 420-11.
48. Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, Annual Reports of the Navy Department, 1904, (Washington, 1904), pp. 576-577.
49. Dewey to Secnav, December 5, 1906, General Board File 420-11.

architects and five naval officers none of whom would be bureau chiefs. The sole duty of this board would be to examine all designs on new construction ships and make appropriate recommendations to the Secretary. Another was to break from the long tradition of the past which restricted the design function to the Navy only; the Board wanted the Navy Department to amend its rules and invite private shipbuilding firms to develop plans of their own which would be placed in competition with those of the naval constructors. The Board on Designs would then have a real choice and the Navy would benefit from the "outside ideas and experience."[50] Both ideas were too revolutionary to be immediately accepted by traditionalists in the Navy. Rear Admiral Washington L. Capps, Chief of the Bureau of Construction and Repair, told the Secretary that he was opposed to the use of the designs of private industry because of the difficulty in granting access to the secret information on which the designs were based, and because the procedure did not conform to that practiced by the world's leading maritime powers.[51]

Dewey was so distressed at the inability of his Board to influence the Navy's ship design policy that he told Senator Henry Cabot Lodge that the Navy "was going to hell," and he advised President

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50. Dewey to Secnav, December 29, 1905, General Board File 420.
51. Capps to Secnav, 2nd endorsement to letter from Rear Admiral Richard Wainwright, Senior Member Present, General Board to Secnav, June 28, 1910, General Board File 420.

Roosevelt that if the disputes between the General Board and the Board on Construction were antagonistic to Secretary Bonaparte, he would ask to be relieved as President of the General Board. Later Bonaparte assured Dewey that he would "recognize and settle the powers" of the two organizations.[52] Nothing came of Bonaparte's promise and the line, frustrated by its failure to assert itself through the only departmental forum available to it, would seek other avenues of change.

The ship design controversy was one among many problem areas which fragmented the Navy Department, and so much so that its senior naval officer, Admiral Dewey, felt the need to include a special plea in his service-wide Christmas message of 1906. He wrote, "Let us have neither cliques or grudges, but all stand together for the good of the country and the service."[53]

Secretary of the Navy Victor Metcalf sensed the growing dissatisfaction and, in an attempt to relieve it, he issued a directive encouraging naval officers to submit suggestions to him for improvement of the naval service.[54] For some naval officers this did not go far enough. One suggested that article 252 of Navy Regulations forbidding the unauthorized use of the public press to discuss

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52. Mrs. George Dewey's diary entry January 20, 1906, Dewey Papers.
53. Washington Times, December 25, 1906, Dewey Scrapbook, Dewey Papers.
54. Navy Department General Order Number 49, June 20, 1907, Record Group 80, National Archives.

departmental policies[55] be amended to allow "all officers of the Navy ... to discuss openly in public print over their own signatures all service matters not obviously confidential ...." In his view, this would encourage naval officers to air their grievances "in the mooted questions of policy and design ...."[56] Needless to say, Article 252 remained unchanged. Nevertheless, a few line officer activists, convinced that their only recourse lay with the press, began a muckraking publicity campaign. Captain Barnette, still with the General Board, informed Luce that articles to be published in The Navy would "bear fruit" and that McLure's Magazine and The New York Times would also be coming out with pieces which would trigger "investigations and reforms."[57]

Barnette's prediction was indeed accurate for in January of 1908, an article appeared in McLure's which shook the very foundations of the Navy Department and led to an inquiry by Senator Eugene Hale's Naval Affairs Committee. Ironically, (but probably not coincidentally) it arrived on the news stands less than one month after the departure of the "Great White Fleet" on its cruise around the

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55. Navy Regulations, 1905, p. 65.
56. Tracy B. Kittredge, unpublished mss. on the life of Admiral William S. Sims, Division of Naval History, Washington, D.C., citing letter from Rear Admiral Casper Goodrich to Secnav, August 12, 1907, p. 828. Kittredge's manuscript was based on Admiral Sims Papers and was written with the latter's consent, supervision, and active cooperation. Many of its pages contain notations in Sims' own handwriting.
57. Barnette to Luce, October 19, 1907, Luce Papers.

world. Public pride in the Navy was at an all-time high. What ·tter time to burst the public image and expose the truth. The author, Henry Reuterdahl charged that there was little basis for confidence in the Navy for it was "unprepared for war."[58] He presumably spoke with some authority for he was the American editor of Jane's Fighting Ships, an associate of the United States Naval Institute, and a respected observer of naval affairs. He was also a frequent correspondent of Commander William Sims, Inspector of Target Practice and President Roosevelt's naval aide. As a matter of fact, Sims was the source of much of the material on which the article was based, for the line officer insurgents felt that to be effective the charges had to be accurate and capable of substantiation.[59] Sims had been for many years an outspoken critic of the bureaus' conservatism. His "theory of reform consisted solely of running down the management of the naval establishment at every opportunity in the expectation that the harsher the criticism the greater the desired improvement."[60]

Reuterdahl's article summarized many of the well-founded complaints which had been put forth by the line officers and General Board for many years: the main armor belts on battleships were too low in

58. Henry Reuterdahl, "The Needs of Our Navy," McLure's Magazine, Vol. 30 (January, 1908), pp. 251-263.
59. Kittredge mss., p. 841.
60. Seward W. Livermore, "American Naval Development 1898-1914 With Special Reference to Foreign Affairs," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1943), p. 49.

the water for adequate shell protection; ships had extremely low freeboards[61] which minimized the capability of the guns in even a moderate seaway; the powder handling system in turrets was antiquated and dangerous; guns of the secondary batteries were poorly shielded; there was a critical shortage of torpedoes for destroyers; the bureau system was refractory to change. The startling thing about Reuterdahl's effort was not the content but the audience; for the first time many of the defects, well known in naval circles became matters of wide public knowledge. Many newspapers throughout the country called their readers attention to the article and some published summaries of it. Demands for investigation and reform ran high. President Roosevelt, unaware that the charges were to be published, suffered considerable embarrassment, but resisted attempts by Secretary Metcalf to court-martial Sims and his colleagues.[62]

The Senate Naval Affairs Committee, under Eugene Hale, began an investigation of the charges in February of 1908. He had apparently received assurances from the involved bureau chiefs that Reuterdahl's accusations were without merit.[63] Hale's habitual resistance to organizational reform and his unflinching support of

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61. A ship's freeboard is the height from the edge of the main deck to the waterline.
62. Kittredge mss., p. 848, pp. 861-864.
63. Ibid., p. 864.

the bureau structure left little doubt in the minds of the line officers that their grievances would receive little sympathy from him. An examination of the Senate inquiry confirms this view, and the investigation not only did not lead to reform, but no report of it was ever issued.[64] Hale's reply to the criticisms was to introduce a bill on January 9, 1908 which was designed to abolish the General Board.[65] Although the General Board did not actively participate in the Reuterdahl episode, Hale saw it as the salient of the line officers from which the bureaus were "unjustly and unreasonably assailed...." It was his belief that his bill would "unify the Department" and "rid it of these troublesome, vexations and jealous questions that have arisen in years past...."[66] The effect of course would have been to drastically reduce the influence of the line and to return to the pre-1900 system of planning for war. One officer called Hale's plan "the most villanous measure ever put into words" and a "traitorous act."[67]

Although Hale was unable to translate his bill into law, the line officer insurgents felt that time was running out. Their principal

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64. U.S., Congress, Senate, Naval Affairs Committee, Alleged Structural Defects in Battleships of the U.S. Navy, (Washington, 1908).
65. Army and Navy Journal, January 11, 1908, Vol. 45, p. 496. Hale's bill read in part: "no permanent board of any kind shall be ... continued in operation unless expressly prpvided for by law...."
66. Army and Navy Journal, January 18, 1908, Vol. 45, p. 520.
67. Commander William F. Fullam to Sims, February 25, 1908, Sims Papers.

supporter, Theodore Roosevelt would be in the White House only for another year. No successor would probably have his enlightened outlook on naval affairs. Reform must take place now or be deferred for many years to come. There was also the selfish concern that unless their position in the Navy Department was solidified by organizational change, they would become the target for reprisal after Roosevelt's departure. Although sympathetic, the President hesitated to move without a mandate from the press, the public, and Congress. Besides he was not at this juncture convinced that the Navy needed a general staff and a chief of staff. He analysed the trouble as due to the presence of old and incapable officers at the heads of the bureaus, and concluded that the solution might have to be a gradual one aimed at lowering the age of the Navy's flag officers.[68]

The General Board kept clear of the controversy. It had already gone on record with respect to the substance of the deficiencies and was in no position to act in the independent and radical fashion of Sims and the other reformers. Hale's threat gave adequate testimony to the Board's vulnerability. Even as late as 1910 there was an attitude prevalent among the Board members that caution was prudent in the face of bureau enmity and Hale's power.[69]

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68. Commander Albert L. Key to Sims, April 16, 1908, Sims Papers. Key summarized for Sims a recent letter he had received from Roosevelt; Key to Roosevelt, April 14, 1908, copy in Sims Papers.
69. Bradley A. Fiske, From Midshipman to Rear Admiral, (New York: The Century Co., 1919), pp. 477-478.

The ship design controversy erupted anew in June of 1908. Commander Albert L. Key, a former associate of the General Board, a former aide to President Roosevelt, and one of the leading line officer insurgents, wrote Secretary Metcalf and expressed grave concern over many of the features of the battleship North Dakota then undergoing construction at the Fore River Shipbuilding Company in Quincy, Mass. His comments were forwarded in response to General Order 49 and as part of the continuing campaign to demonstrate the ineptitude of the bureaus.[70] The complaints were essentially those discussed in the Reuterdahl article.[71] Sims called President Roosevelt's attention to the letter and told him that the "criticisms are perfectly sound."[72] Sims then recommended that the President order the Secretary to refer the problem to a joint conference of the General Board and the Naval War College.[73] On July 2, 1908, the Acting Secretary of the Navy, Truman H. Newberry, so directed and the meeting convened at the Naval War College on July 9, 1908.[74] Later, additional officers were sent to participate so that the final total, fifty, would be representative of the entire Navy, The conference

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70. Key to Sims, May 2, 1908, Sims Papers.
71. Key to Secnav, June 9, 1908, copy in General Board File 420-6.
72. Sims to Roosevelt, June 23, 1908, Sims Papers. Prior to Key's letter to the Secretary, he and Sims agreed that the latter would show it to the President. Key to Sims, May 12, 1908, Sims Papers.
73. Sims to William Loeb (Roosevelt's private secretary), June 29, 1908, Sims Papers.
74. Dewey to Secnav, November 11, 1908, forwarding a resume of the Newport Conference, General Board File 420-2.

did not accept as justified all of Commander Key's criticisms but enough of them to confirm previous judgments that significant changes were needed in the Navy's ship design system. One of the resolutions adopted by the Newport Conference by a vote of 35 to 14 called for future battleship designs to be submitted to a special board of officers for examination and recommendation. This was a clear condemnation of the Board on Construction and actually presaged its doom.[75]

The unwillingness of the General Board to agree to all of Key's points enbittered Sims, Key, and the other insurgents. Sims wrote President Roosevelt and unjustifiably accused the Board of having "systematically defended the Bureaus and condemned the critics."[76] Although Dewey had not participated in the conference,[77] he too came under attack for a speech in which the criticisms were minimized and the Navy's efficiency exalted. Key called the speech an "outrage" and accused Dewey of "deliberately attempting to deceive" the nation.[78]

The events of 1908 - the Reuterdahl article and the Newport Conference - created a momentum for change which was to result in a

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75. Dewey to Secnav, November 11, 1908, forwarding a resume of the Newport Conference, General Board File 420-2.
76. Sims to Roosevelt, November 15, 1908, Sims Papers.
77. Dewey had for many years made a practice of absenting himself from all the summer meetings of the General Board. In addition, the Newport Conference was oriented to the technical and Dewey was not considered very apt in this area. Sims to Taylor, December 18, 1902, Sims Papers.
78. Key to Sims, November 27, 1908, Sims Papers.

rather dramatic shift in naval administrative practice. President Roosevelt sounded the keynote when he departed from the position that it was not the system but the people that needed attention, to the view that "no matter how excellent may be the individual officers at the head of the bureaus, [the organization] tends to a certain woodeness of administration, to a lack of initiative and flexibility, which is not advantageous."[79]

Roosevelt's sixth Secretary of the Navy, Truman H. Newberry, took office on December 1, 1908. He had the benefit of prior naval service and had been the Assistant Secretary for over three years. Dewey was quite pleased with his appointment and, as a matter of fact, had favored him for the Secretary's job back in 1906.[80] Newberry's solution to the Navy's internal problems was a moderate one. He looked on the General Board as the organization which, if modified, could unify the Navy, the line and the staff, the bureaucrats and non-bureaucrats. He called the General Board "the very essence...of the naval establishment" and the best source of advice which the Secretary had. Testifying before the House Naval Affairs Committee, he said, "If the Secretary has any doubt in his mind he has the General Board ... to caution him when he is new and to

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79. Roosevelt to Acting Secretary Truman H. Newberry, August 28, 1908, copy in Sims Papers.
80. Dewey to Congressman William A. Smith, June 16, 1906, Dewey Papers. Dewey asked Smith to propose Newberry's name to President Roosevelt as Bonaparte's successor.

advise him as he goes along. I do not know how he would get along without it." He would not however favor granting the Board "executive authority" because that would be "absolutely incompatible" with the American system of government.[81]

Newberry amended Navy Regulations to eliminate the Board's membership restrictions with respect to numbers and rank.[82] He planned to increase its size to 15 members and include on it representatives from each bureau. He hoped to enlarge the Board on Construction, adding to its rolls a representative from the General Board and several other officers somewhat more liberal in outlook than the bureau chiefs.[83] He indicated that in doing all these things he would be creating within the General Board a true general staff.[84]

At first, President Roosevelt endorsed Newberry's plan[85] but the insurgents persuaded him to change his mind and he directed Newberry to hold all reforms in abeyance. They saw in his scheme an attempt to expand bureau influence and to "destroy the General Board's usefulness as an impartial military adviser."[86] To stem any movement in this direction, Sims prevailed on Roosevelt to

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81. U.S., Congress, House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Appropriations Bill Subjects for Fiscal Year 1910, 60th Cong., 2nd sess., (Washington, 1909), p. 879.
82. Army and Navy Journal, December 5, 1908, Vo. 46, p. 375.
83. Army and Navy Journal, December 26, 1908, Vol. 46, p. 63.
84. Ibid.
85. Fred L. Israel, ed. The State of the Union Messages of the Presidents, 1790-1966 (New York: Chelsea House-Robert Hector, 1966) Vol. 2, p. 2335.
86. Sims to Roosevelt, December 30, 1908, Sims Papers.

appoint a mixed commission to report on the Navy's organizational needs and, on January 27, 1909, the so-called Moody Commission was formally constituted. It consisted of two former Secretaries, Moody and Morton, an ex-Congressman, Dayton, and Admirals Luce, Mahan, Robley D. Evans, William M. Folger, and William S. Cowles.[87]

Meanwhile, Newberry began to modify his plan to expand the General Board. Its membership would be reduced to nine; no bureau chief, (other than the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation) would be members; it would consult daily on all subjects "affecting the greater interests of the Navy....;" Dewey, or in his absence, the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, would "practically be the Chief of Staff, representing the views of the General Board on all matters." The changes would be accomplished by Executive vice Congressional action, and, after a trial of 12 months, Congress would be asked to sanction them.[88]

Late in January, 1909, several members of the Moody Commission met with Newberry and endorsed his revised plan as a temporary measure pending their final report.[89] It is probable that this move was designed to save Newberry considerable embarrassment, for

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87. U.S., Congress, Senate, Naval Affairs Committee, Certain Needs of the Navy, 60th Cong., 2nd sess., Senate Doc. No. 740, (Washington, 1909), p. 1.
88. Newberry to Roosevelt, January 12, 1909, copy in Luce Papers.
89. Army and Navy Journal, January 30, 1909.

despite this qualified endorsement by the Commission, his proposals never went into effect.

The Moody Commission made its final report to President Roosevelt in late February, 1909. It recommended a tight system of bureau control and a division of the Department into five functional areas, one of which would be headed by a Chief of Naval Operations. He would become the Secretary's principal military adviser. The General Board would no longer report to the Secretary but would become one of the divisions under the Chief of Naval Operations.[90] The Commission's organizational philosophy was based on the long-held conviction of one of its members, Admiral Mahan, that advice should be individual and not corporate. He criticized the General Board because it was "irresponsible," i.e., its recommendations were forwarded in the name of the Board rather than one person and, if the advice proved faulty, it would be difficult to hold the whole Board accountable.[91]

Evident also in the Commission's report is the desire to

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90. U.S., Congress, Senate, Final Report of the Commission on Naval Reorganization, 60th Cong., 2nd sess., Senate Doc. No. 743, (Washington, 1909) (hereafter cited as Report of the Moody Commission).

91. Alfred T. Mahan, Naval Administration and Warfare, (Boston: Little, Brown, Co., 1908), p. 5. When Mahan first reported to the Naval War Board of the Spanish-American War, he tried unsuccessfully to get Secretary Long to disestablish the Board and in its place appoint a naval officer to act as his executive for naval strategy. His reasoning was based on the virtue of individual vice corporate responsibility. Mahan to Long, May 10, 1898, Papers of John D. Long, Massachusetts Historical Society Collection, Vol. 78, pp. 119-120.

drastically curtail the General Board's influence and, in so doing, splace Dewey. He would certainly not accept the arduous assignment as Chief of Naval Operations and he could not, with his high rank, be placed in a position subordinate to him. It has been shown that the General Board's role in the Newport Conference generated antipathy on the part of the line insurgents. This coupled with their desire to concentrate advice in one man, and their feeling that the General Board members had a mission to shape naval policy but were not doing so, because they were lacking in "backbone and simply letting things drift along with the most comfort to themselves," contributed to the clear prejudice of the Commission toward the General Board.[92]

Despite President Roosevelt's characterization of the Commission's Report as "conservative" and "nothing drastic,"[93] it was obviously too revolutionary for Congressional leaders to digest and it was never seriously considered by them. It is true that Roosevelt was without much power as an outgoing President, but it is also conceivable that he forwarded the proposals, not with a realistic hope of their implementation, but as a beau geste to the line insurgents.

With President William Taft's arrival in office came a new

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92. Commander William F. Fullam to Sims, May 4, 1909, Sims Papers. Fullam was the Recorder of the Moody Commission and in a position to join with his allies, Luce and Mahan, to influence the findings.
93. Report of the Moody Commission, p. 1.

Secretary of the Navy, George von Lengerke Meyer. The fact that s son-in-law was a naval officer, and his vantage point as Roosevelt's Postmaster General, undoubtedly contributed to his familiarity with the organizational difficulties of the Navy Department. Where others had failed however, he was determined to succeed. He managed to instill a great amount of confidence in all of the line officers. One called him a "secretary in fact as well as name."[94] Another described him as having "the best conception of what the Navy ought to be of any secretary in many years."[95] Even Kaiser Wilhelm praised him as the "American von Tirpitz."[96]

Meyer's relationships with the General Board were unusual in that he made a practice of meeting frequently with the members. Only once before had a Secretary complimented the Board in this manner.[97] Naturally, this instilled a sense of pride in the membership and a renewed feeling of value. While Meyer was satisfied that he had in the General Board an effective policy making organ, there still remained the problem of executing the policy.

Meyer began his search for reform by consulting with the "best minds in the Navy," and by reviewing all of the studies on

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94. Sperry to son Charles, May 16, 1909, Sperry Papers.
95. Fiske, From Midshipman to Rear Admiral, p. 526.
96. M. A. DeWolfe Howe, George von Lengerke Meyer, (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1920), p. 496.
97. Secretary Paul Morton met with the Board in October of 1904. General Board Minutes, October 26, 1904, Vol. 2, p. 54.

reorganization that had been produced in the previous 20 years.[98] On July 13, 1909 he appointed a board of line officers, called the Swift Board after its Chairman, Rear Admiral William Swift. These officers were given carte blanche to determine deficiencies and come up with a solution to the Navy's organizational problems. Their conclusions were much the same as those offered by the Moody Commission: the Navy needed a system to manage the fleet and coordinate the bureaus; the General Board was not able to do these things because it had no means to implement its policies, it was not able to keep itself current on the daily business of the Department, it violated the Mahanite principle of individual, as opposed to corporate responsibility, and the quality of its advice was lacking because it had no responsibility for executing it. Swift and his colleagues wanted to concentrate the war planning function under one person and give him broad powers to define policy and coordinate the bureaus in support of the policy. The General Board would remain, but become subservient to the war planning office, could not initiate recommendations, and would be limited to advising on matters specifically referred to it.[99]

Implementation of the Swift plan would have stripped the Board of

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98. Meyer to Roosevelt, March 10, 1910, cited in Howe, George von L. Meyer, pp. 465-473.
99. The Swift Board Report, October 11, 1909, General Board File 446.

the function for which it had been created - war planning, and as in the case of the Moody Commission Report, would have prompted Dewey to sever his connection with the Board. This is precisely what many of the line officers wanted. To them, the Board was an anachronistic organ, born out of compromise, never intended to be anything more than an opening wedge to a general staff, and together with its President, an obstacle to complete control of the Navy Department. Its reputation as an impartial adjudicator of the Navy's needs might act as a restraint on the advanced ideas of some of the line officers.

Meyer had been told by Rear Admiral Charles S. Sperry that "no one officer however intelligent and single minded" could replace the studied and impartial advice of the General Board, and he strongly recommended that its role be preserved.[100] Meyer heeded Sperry's counsel, and while he adopted the Swift Board recommendations looking to greater control and coordination of the bureaus, he refused to accept those which would have curtailed the General's Board's independence and stature.

Meyer had two options: he could request Congressional approval of his changes, or he could take action on his own. He decided to choose the latter course, and prior to the reconvening of Congress,

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100. Sperry to son Charles, May 16, 1909, Sperry Papers.

and after receiving assurances from the Attorney General that his moves would be covered by the law, he issued change number nine to Navy Regulations, authorizing the establishment of the "Aid System."[101]

Four line officer Rear Admirals, called Aids, were placed in charge of Navy Department activities in the areas of Fleet Operations, Material, Inspections, and Personnel. Each would coordinate the work of those bureaus whose functions related to the particular area, (for example: the Aid for Material would supervise the Bureaus of Ordnance, Construction and Repair, Equipment, and Steam Engineering). Two of the Aids, Material and Operations, became ex-officio members of the General Board. The Aid for Operations and the General Board had almost identical areas of responsibility but they were to work in conjunction with one another, with the Board being pre-eminent in the field of policy, and the Aid for Operations in its execution. The Board on Construction was discontinued and its duties were transferred to the General Board.[102]

The Meyer system was regarded by many line officers as a great leap forward; the old nemesis and voice of arch-conservatism, the Board on Construction no longer existed; bureau independence would be curbed; the policies developed by the General Board would be well

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101. Regulations for the Government of the U.S. Navy, 1909, change number 9, (Washington, 1909).
102. Ibid.

represented at the Secretary's level and their execution well supervised; the Board would define the measures necessary for the preparation for war and the Aids would see to their implementation.

The attitude of Congress to this dramatic shift was somewhat surprising. Faced with a fait accompli which could be overcome only through legislation, it agreed to adopt a wait and see attitude. Dewey's influence may have been a factor in this decision for he had written to persuade members of the House Naval Affairs Committee to give the Meyer System a "free and unrestricted trial."[103] The two great antagonists, Senator Hale, and Congressman Foss, were opposed to the development but, while they had the power to prevent legislative approval, they were not able to muster the strength to initiate disapproval.

A quite remarkable calm settled over the Navy Department during the period from 1909 to 1913 and it was no accident that the four years coincided with Mr. Meyer's term of office. His reorganization and strong hand checked both the bureaus and the line insurgents. The fact that he remained in office twice as long as five of his immediate predecessors gave to the Office of the Secretary of the Navy a degree of experience and stability markedly absent in the earlier years.

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103. Dewey to Congressman George A. Loud, January 31, 1910, Dewey Papers. Many years earlier, Dewey had used his prestige to get Loud a seat on this Committee.

The relations between the Board and the Aids could have been fraught with difficulty. After all, both organizations addressed what was essentially the same problem area and, while one focused on policy and the other on its implementation, it would have been quite easy to confuse the two. In practice however, the two groups worked in close harmony and with a "unanimity of purpose."[104] Not all of the Board programs were translated into action but under Meyer's regime there was a confidence that they would be properly presented and, if accepted, adequately implemented.

About three weeks before Meyer's departure, his Aid for Operations, Rear Admiral Charles E. Vreeland, took sick and was relieved by the Aid for Inspections, Rear Admiral Bradley A. Fiske. Fiske was strongly identified with the line officer extremists. His philosophy was purely and simply militaristic: he admired the absence of strife in the shipboard community and saw in its admixture of Law and Justice, a model for the nation and the world.[105] He looked with envy on the German Navy which permitted its senior officers direct access to the Kaiser and he expressed the wish that the United States had a similar system, i.e., the elimination of the Secretary of the Navy. The elevation of Fiske to the post of Aide for Operations placed him in a key position, for he was, in effect, the Secretary's link with the professionals.

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104. Fiske, From Midshipman to Rear Admiral, p. 475.
105. Ibid., p. 490.

While Fiske was an ex-officio member of the General Board, he quickly sought to reduce its influence. Coincident with his appointment as Aid for Operations, Secretary Meyer addressed a communication to the General Board defining its relationship with the Aids. It is highly probable that Fiske drafted this document; Meyer, as a man with less than three weeks to serve had little to gain. The directive called for the Board to forward along with its decisions, a tally of the voting, it made the Aid for Operations the point of contact between the Board and all offices and bureaus of the Navy Department, and finally, it specified that the Aids who were ex-officio members of the Board would be required to state their personal recommendations on Board decisions irrespective of their vote. Meyer explained that these procedures would strengthen the General Board in its relation with future Secretaries. This might very well have been the intent but the actual effect was to solidify the power of the Aid for Operations for it freed him from the requirement to represent the General Board view. If he did not agree with its decision, he could present a strong case to the Secretary for his own viewpoint and correspondingly minimize that of the Board.[106] Of course, he could have done this without a directive from Meyer, but having it made things much easier.

The theory was soon to be confirmed by Fiske's practice. In a

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106. Meyer to Dewey, February 10, 1913, Dewey Papers.

rather unusual move, the General Board's Secretary, Commander vard H. Campbell, forwarded a memorandum to the General Board's Executive Committee which described the disturbing decline of the Board during Fiske's regime as Aid for Operations. Members felt isolated from the Secretary; they were convinced that their recommendations were not being presented to him as their thinking but rather that of Fiske. On occasion, Fiske had the lone dissenting opinion in an otherwise unanimous decision, but his prevailed because he was able to persuade the Secretary to accept his position. Campbell concluded with the remark that Fiske had so much prestige as Aid for Operations that he should be willing to share a little of it with the General Board.[107]

There was another cause for concern: Dewey's health was not good. It was rumored that he suffered a stroke in June of 1914, and some members were apprehensive that the Board without Dewey's prestigious signature on its papers would cease to exist or at the least, decline greatly in influence.[108] Dewey sensed this too, for about the same time he wrote a letter to Rear Admiral Charles J. Badger, (who would eventually succeed him as the Board's senior officer) stating that he was convinced that the General Board would survive, "with all its power for good to the navy and the country," only if men of Badger's quality were associated with it.[109]

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107. Memorandum prepared by Commander Edward H. Campbell, July 30, 1914, General Board File 401.
108. Ibid.
109. Dewey to Badger, June 18, 1914, Dewey Papers.

While the relationship between Fiske and the Board left much to be desired, so did that between him and Meyer's successor, Josephus Daniels. It would be hard to imagine two men with more antipodal philosophies. One pacificistic, the other militaristic; one a strong advocate of a general staff; the other a proponent of a pluralistic approach to naval administration; one concentrating his efforts on honing the Navy's tools of violence, the other developing plans to transform the Navy into a "school of the nation."

Daniels reversed the trend established during Meyer's administration; he didn't particularly admire the Aid System and although he did not abolish it, he did for the most part, deal directly with the bureau chiefs. A notable exception to this policy was his continued use of the Aid for Operations, Admiral Fiske.[110] This was borne not out of desire but of necessity. He distrusted Fiske and suspected that he was trying to get power into his own hands and "Prussianize the American Navy."[111] He also remembered former Secretary Meyer's warning to him to be on guard against overcentralization within the Department lest it prejudice the principle of civilian control.[112]

Daniels was very much impressed with the work of the General

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110. Josephus Daniels, The Wilson Era: Years of Peace 1910-1917, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1944), p. 239.
111. Ibid., pp. 242-243.
112. Ibid., p. 119.

Board.[113] He referred to it as the "Supreme Court of Naval Policy"[114] and paid its members the singular and unprecedented honor of including a summary of their work in his first annual report.[115] He admired the General Board because, unlike a general staff, it was consonant with the "ideals upon which ... [the] Government was founded."[116] At the same time he wanted to keep it small by reducing the number of ex-officio memberships.[117]

Daniels' deteriorating relations with Fiske, the renaissance of the bureaus, and the crisis in Europe reopened the Pandora's Box which Meyer had closed and sat upon. The line insurgents, led by Fiske, were loosed again and they began a movement designed to enact into law a provision which would assign to one officer in the Navy the power, responsibility, and personnel resources for the general direction of the Navy and in particular its readiness for war.[118] The implications of this measure were tremendous. It was not the Secretary but the Chief of Naval Operations who would have had the responsibility for the Navy's readiness for war. It represented a giant step forward for Fiske and the insurgents, backward

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113. Fiske to Rear Admiral Charles E. Vreeland, July 22, 1913, General Board File 401.
114. Daniels, The Wilson Era, 1910-1917, p. 322.
115. Report of the Secretary of the Navy, Annual Reports of the Navy Department, 1913, p. 29.
116. Daniels to Dewey, April 11, 1916, Dewey Papers.
117. Dewey to Captain William L. Rodgers, April 15, 1913, Dewey Papers.
118. Henry P. Beers, "The Development of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations," Part II, Military Affairs, (Fall, 1946), p. 12.

for Daniels, Dewey, and Dewey's heir apparent and General Board member, Rear Admiral Charles J. Badger.

Daniels' opposition was founded in part on his disinclination for centralization and the concomitant effect it would have on the powers of his office, but also because the enactment of Fiske's plan would have substantially lessened the role of the General Board and reduced the stature of its President, George Dewey.[119] Dewey, consistent with his past convictions, refused to support Fiske.[120] Badger was also totally opposed to military centralization; he found it "contrary to the genius" of the American people and government. At the same time he advised Daniels that there was "ample room for greater military influence ... without encroaching upon or in any way lessening the civil control in all matters of importance."[121]

Neither the hopes of Fiske nor the fears of Daniels, Dewey and Badger were realized. However, the war in Europe broke down the traditional Congressional resistance to naval reform and they voted a compromise measure, authorizing the creation of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations to direct fleet operations and develop war plans.[122]

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119. Daniels to Dewey, March 4, 1915, General Board File 446.
120. Fiske, From Midshipman to Rear Admiral, p. 550. Fiske rationalized Dewey's defection by attributing it to the latter's illness.
121. Badger to Daniels, January 26, 1915, Daniels Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
122. Beers, "Development of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations," Military Affairs, (Fall, 1946), p. 12.

The act was passed on March 3, 1915, almost 15 years to the day that Secretary John D. Long issued General Order 544, institutionalizing for the first time the function of war planning in peace. While John D. Long's experiment and Henry C. Taylor's compromise lost the function for which it was created 15 years earlier, it continued in existence for 35 more years as a source of advice to the Secretary of the Navy on matters which he chose to refer to it.

CHAPTER IV

THE WAR PLANNING SYSTEM[1]

The General Board was not the first organization within the Navy Department to produce war plans. When the Office of Naval Intelligence was established in 1882, it was assigned war plans as one of its many duties.[2] In 1895, concurrent with the "crisis" with Great Britain over the Venezuelan boundary, the Naval War College began producing plans for war.[3] The impending trouble with Spain over the Cuban question prompted these two organizations and several ad hoc boards to produce plans offering strategic and tactical guidance for the projection of American sea power.[4]

To Rear Admiral Henry C. Taylor, these efforts left much to be desired. They were, for the most part, responses to immediate

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1. Although all of the General Board's activities could be included under the phrase, "war planning," the term is used in this chapter in the restricted sense, and is defined as the administrative process which produced documents providing general and specific guidance to fleet commanders in the event of war.
2. Rear Admiral Richard Wainwright, "The General Board," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 48 (February, 1922), p. 192.
3. Rear Admiral Henry C. Taylor, "The Fleet," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 29 (December, 1903), p. 803.
4. Rear Admiral William L. Rodgers, "The Relations of the War College to the Navy Department," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 38 (September, 1912), pp. 843-844.

crises rather than well considered analyses of the merits of various courses of action. No less than four war plans for action against Spain were available: one produced by the Naval War College, two by ad hoc Navy Department boards, and the last by the Office of Naval Intelligence. The War College plan was rejected by the first board.[5] A second board hypothesized operations against both Spain and Japan.[6] None of the plans were consistent in their assumptions or courses of action, and vividly illustrated how the Navy's best thinkers were unable to agree on even the basics in preparing for war against Spain. The lesson of the confusion was clear to Taylor and it led to the centralization of the war planning function in the General Board. Now the aim would be to "prepare studies for all eventualities" and to furnish a commander-in-chief in war with complete studies of the theatre of war ... to enable him to act unhampered by the necessity of forming a judgment off-hand regarding a great variety of questions on which hasty judgment cannot safely be made."[7]

"All eventualities" was the determinant which motivated the Board's war planners. While more attention was devoted to the

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5. Plan of Operations Against Spain, prepared by a board headed by Rear Admiral Francis M. Ramsay and forwarded December, 1896, General Board War Plans File.
6. Plans of Campaign Against Spain and Japan, prepared by a board headed by Rear Admiral Montgomery Sicard and forwarded on June 30, 1897, General Board War Plans File.
7. Captain French E. Chadwick, President of Naval War College, "Opening Address," delivered at the War College, June 4, 1902, Naval War College Archives, Newport, R.I.

cases of war against Germany and Japan, the other world powers, Russia, France, and England were not ignored. The Board developed plans for attacks on French possessions in Saigon;[8] on England's bastions at Halifax, Bermuda, Jamaica, Esquimalt, and in the Great Lakes;[9] and on Russia's great Pacific port of Vladivostock.[10] It was this broad scope approach which distinguished the pre-1900 war planning system from that adopted by the Board. The perspective was changed from immediate contingencies to a vast range of possible naval actions, based not only on U. S. unilateral interventions, but on alliances with friendly foreign governments. One of the Board's early plans for action in the West Pacific envisioned the possibility of war in Chinese waters between Germany, France, and Russia on one Side, and Great Britain, Japan, and the United States on the other.[11]

While the Board's objective was to plan for "all eventualities" it found itself very much unprepared for the Japanese-American "crisis" which bloomed in October of 1906. On October 27, 1906, Mr. William Loeb, Jr., President Theodore Roosevelt's private

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8. Memorandum from Second Committee, July 29, 1903, approved by the General Board the same date, General Board File 425.
9. Ibid.
10. Acting Secretary of the Navy (hereafter cited as Secnav) Frank W. Hackett to Rear Admiral Frederick Rodgers, February 16, 1901, General Board File 425-2. Letter drafted by General Board.
11. List of Contents, War Portfolio Number Two, June 1, 1904, General Board File 425.

secretary, asked Secretary of the Navy Charles J. Bonaparte if the General Board is studying a plan of operations in the event of hostilities with Japan."[12] Although Admiral George Dewey assured the President that the "General Board has already studied the situation and that plans are now complete,"[13] the Board was, as a matter of fact, unequipped for such a contingency. The General Board had no "studied" war plan against Japan prior to October of 1906 and indeed, in that month had advised the Secretary that the West Indes was the "most likely and only probable theater of war."[14] When relations with Japan became strained in late October, 1906, the Board "hurriedly prepared" a plan of action against Japan and called it the "Orange Plan."[15] It was not until December of 1906 that documents predicated on war with Japan were placed in the Asiatic War Portfolio.[16]

War plans were segregated geographically into three numbered "portfolios." Portfolio number one related to the Atlantic; number two to the Western Pacific; and number three to the Eastern Pacific. Each portfolio included: documents pertaining to the political,

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12. Loeb to Bonaparte, October 27, 1906, General Board File 425-2.
13. Dewey to Assistant Secnav Truman H. Newberry, October 29, 1906, General Board File 425-2.
14. Dewey to Secnav, October 2, 1906, General Board File 404.
15. Memorandum by Commander Joseph L. Jayne, General Board Secretary, November 23, 1909, General Board File 425.
16. Lieutenant Commander Samuel E. Kittelle, General Board Secretary, to President Naval War College, December 4, 1906, General Board File 425-2.

strategical, and tactical situation in the area; detailed plans for the seizure of advanced bases; other plans "more general in scope or having other objects in view" as for example the plan for the occupation of Haiti-Santo Domingo or the capture of the Venezuelan custom houses; harbor charts of foreign countries; and intelligence information.[17]

Many of the Board's war plans were strictly informational in nature and had no "action" section. Thus, the War Plan for Central America was nothing more than a Naval Officer's Baedeker to Guatemala, Salvador, Honduras, and Costa Rica.[18] In contrast the War Plan for Haiti-Santo Domingo was replete with detail, even specifying the number of "wig-wag" flags necessary to support the operation. This plan called for the seizure of Samana and Fort Liberty Bays by a Marine Expeditionary Force as soon as hostilities with Germany commenced in order to deny their use to the enemy. The Marines were to hold the sites for about four to six weeks until relieved by the Army for other operations. The specificity of this plan can best be shown by describing a small portion of the section of the operation calling for the capture of Samana Bay.

A force of 14 vessels was prescribed, including two transports,

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17. Memorandum by Commander Joseph L. Jayne, November 23, 1909, General Board File 425.
18. Naval War Plan for Central America, War Portfolio No. 1, Reference No. 5R, General Board File Box 11.

and three gunboats. Each one of the ships was given a designation: T1 and T2 for the transports, D1, D2, D3 for the gunboats and so on. D1 was scheduled to lie to near T1, provide boats to assist in the disembarkation of T1, send her sailing launch and crew alongside the collier to receive and plant mines, then embark a section of Marines from T1 and proceed to the town of Santa Barbara de Samana. There the ship was to bombard the barracks, assist in the landing and occupation of the town, and on completion go to an assigned position near the southern portion of the bay entrance, sound the channels, and plant buoys or beacons where necessary, as aids to navigation. D1 was also to mark the limiting points in the southern channels where mines were to be planted or boom defenses to be placed. All of the other 13 vessels were given similarly detailed assignments.

The general procedure which the Board used to formulate the plans for each portfolio was first to select the area, then gather the information, prepare and issue the documents to the appropriate fleet commanders for their criticisms, and finally promulgate the plans for the guidance of the commanders at sea and the bureaus ashore.

Secretary John D. Long's original letter of instructions to the General Board authorized it to "decide upon the fields of action to

be studied."[19] This gave to the Board the initiative in selecting the sites within each portfolio area where U.S. naval operations might occur. The locales were chosen on the basis of "political conditions" and after an analysis of the "natural strategic points where operations may be expected in war." The usual objective around which the plans were designed was the seizure of an advanced base in foreign territory, either to support U.S. forces or to deny its use to an enemy.[20]

Information resources on which plans were built included the Office of Naval Intelligence, U.S. Navy ships, U.S. Consuls, and friendly foreigners. Undercover officer agents were placed aboard some ships engaged in training operations in areas of particular interest to the Board.[21] The Board also initiated the practice of having flag officers at sea in various parts of the world discreetly compile lists of "confidential agents" in foreign countries who could "probably be approached to advantage," in the event war threatened, as transmitters of valuable information.[22] One such individual, listed in Portfolio Number One, was Manuel Botini of Montevideo, a ship chandler with "unusual facilities and ability to successfully deal with Uruaguayan officials ....[and obtain] information when

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19. Long to Dewey, March 30, 1900, General Board File 401.
20. Report of Special War Plans Committee, October 24, 1903, General Board File 425.
21. Taylor to William H. Moody, December 22, 1902, William H. Moody Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
22. Secnav to Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Naval Forces, South Atlantic Station, December 21, 1900, General Board File 425-1. Letter drafted by General Board.

others fail."[23]

Once the necessary data was gathered the Board would, in conjunction with the Naval War College, write the document in such a way as to give the commander at sea a full appreciation of the strategic thinking which guided the war planners. They would include objectives to be gained, whether policy was to be aggressive or defensive, probably theaters of action, forces likely to be encountered, minimum friendly forces necessary for success, bases available, and routes to the war zones. Tactical suggestions as to the types of screening, scouting and battle formations to use were also offered to the fleet commanders, however their adoption was by no means mandatory.[24]

The next step in the process was to forward the plan to the appropriate fleet commander for his comment and evaluation. This not only provided the Board with an independent and practical judgment of its work, but also identified the fleet commander more closely with a plan he might have to execute in the event of war.[25] In the eyes of the General Board, a war plan served primarily to guide a commander in the event of war, but in addition it was designed to help him

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23. Secnav to Commander-in-Chief, North Atlantic Fleet, November 9, 1903, General Board File 425-1. Letter drafted by General Board.
24. Acting Secnav Beekman Winthrop to Dewey, October 1, 1910, General Board File 425. Letter drafted by General Board.
25. General Board Minutes, December 30, 1903, Vol. 1, p. 383.

evaluate his command's ability to execute a war-time function and, in the event a gap became evident between responsibilities and capabilities, he would be expected to take appropriate corrective action.[26]

The Board was also sensitive to one of the traditional dangers of centralized planning: restricting the judgment of the commander at sea. Every plan forwarded to the fleet made it very clear that it was not the intention of the officials in Washington to dictate specific courses of action; on the contrary it emphasized that the fleet commander was authorized all the "sea room" he felt he needed. At the same time he was advised that "radical changes in the Plans, while quite within the limit of ... [his] power should be made only after an exhaustive consideration of the situation."[27] The Board's determination to foster a healthy working relationship with the admirals at sea led Taylor in November of 1900 to initiate a program whereby all flag officers and their staffs enroute afloat assignments, visited the General Board offices to familiarize themselves with the war plans and the Board's strategic thinking.[28]

Prior to the establishment of the Joint Army and Navy Board in July of 1903, the General Board experienced some difficulty in

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26. Acting Secnav Charles H. Darling to Commander-in-Chief Pacific Station, July 16, 1904, General Board File 425-6. Letter drafted by General Board.
27. Acting Secnav Charles H. Darling to Rear Admiral Frederick Rodgers, February 16, 1901, General Board File 425-2. Letter drafted by General Board.
28. Taylor to Dewey, November 26, 1900, Dewey Papers.

coordinating its plans with the Army. The area of greatest concern was the Caribbean and, at the initiative of the Board, Secretary John D. Long wrote Secretary of War Elihu Root, asking him to send officer representatives to confer with the General Board on a war plan centered on Haiti and involving Army forces.[29] The Army did not respond until the invitation was re-extended over four months later.[30] Finally, over six months after the initial proposal an inter-service agreement was made which called for the two branches to act in concert in war planning for the Caribbean in general and Haiti in particular.[31]

After the formation of the Joint Board, coordination was greatly facilitated, not only because Dewey was its senior member and President of the General Board, but the other Navy representatives were also members of the General Board. Cooperation between the two services was further enhanced in 1904 when an arrangement was made between the Army War College and the Naval War College to consult on joint war planning matters.[32]

War plans were not always treated with significance by those outside the confines of the General Board. In one instance Portfolio

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29. Long to Root, December 13, 1900, General Board Letterpress Vol. 1, p. 115.
30. Acting Secnav Frank W. Hackett to Root, April 24, 1901, General Board File 413.
31. Root to Long, June 8, 1901, General Board File 413.
32. Taylor to President, Naval War College, June 28, 1904, General Board File 425; Lieutenant General Adna Chaffe, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army to Dewey, March 1, 1905, General Board File 425.

Number Three, containing war plans for the Eastern Pacific area, was forwarded via an officer courier to the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Station on July 16, 1904,[33] but was not received by him until nine months later owing to the fact that the documents were inadvertently left on board the former flagship when the Admiral transferred to U. S. S. Chicago.[34] A complete set of plans was re-issued to him but when the time came for him to be relieved he forgot to turn them over to his successor.[35] On another occasion a war plan destined for the Commander-in-Chief of the North Atlantic Fleet was delayed in delivery seven months because the courier, the Commander of the Caribbean Squadron, had carelessly mis-addressed it to the Naval War College.[36] In still another instance Admiral Dewey thought it necessary to ask the Secretary of the Navy to chastise the Asiatic Fleet Commander for not expending more effort in the evaluation and criticism of the Board's war plans.[37]

Even some of the General Board members evidenced disinteredness in the field of war plans. Taylor criticized them for looking on this important facet of their responsibilities as solely an

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33. Secnav to Commander-in-Chief Pacific Station, July 16, 1904, General Board File 425-3.
34. Captain John F. Hunker to Secnav, March 13, 1905, General Board File 425-3.
35. Rear Admiral William T. Swinburne to Secnav, October 16, 1906, General Board File 425-2.
36. General Board File, November 26, 1903.
37. Secnav to Commander-in-Chief Asiatic Fleet, April 26, 1906, General Board File 425-2.

intellectual exercise.[38] He went so far as to warn Dewey that their attitude, so antipodal to the philosophy which guided the Board's birth, might presage the Board's dissolution for without the war planning function the Board would be stripped of a large share of its "advisory value."[39]

As has been indicated earlier, the Naval War College worked closely with the Board in the production of war plans but not without prejudice to its role as an educational institution. By 1911 the requirements of the General Board became so demanding that the officers on the staff on the College advised their President that they could continue to assist the General Board, but only at the expense of the educative function. Continuance of the policy of the past would result, in their view, in the existence of a fine body of plans but few officers adequately trained in their interpretation and implementation. They saw irony in the procedure which required them to assist in the formulation of war plans against Germany "in their spare moments" when Germany was the country

> that for a hundred years has made a systematic and thorough study of war, and has during all those years endeavored to educate its military forces in the proper conduct of war... . [and] whose plans of campaign in 1866 and again in 1870 were so perfect that ... [they] were world-startling successes.[40]

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38. General Board Minutes, December 20, 1904, Vol. 2, p. 88. Captain Richard Wainwright quoting from what he termed one Rear Admiral Taylor's "last letters."
39. Taylor to Dewey, January 22, 1901, Dewey Papers.
40. Report of a Special Committee of the Naval War College Staff, October 19, 1911, to President Naval War College, General Board File 425.

The War College President, Rear Admiral Raymond P. Rodgers, agreed with his officers and asked Dewey to arrange for either an augmentation of officers on the College staff or a removal of the College from the war planning process.[41] Rodgers' staff was neither augmented nor relieved of the additional duty involved in the war plans; however Secretary of the Navy George Meyer did direct the General Board to call on the Naval War College for assistance only if it did not affect their educational mission.[42] This restriction lessened the War College participation in the formulation of plans, but it continued to provide some assistance to the Board until the Chief of Naval Operations assumed the responsibility as the Navy's chief war planner.

Members of the General Board could sympathize with the plight of their fellow officers at the War College. The Board had been formed as a war planning agency but by 1909, as a result of the dissolution of the Board on Construction, it became deeply involved in the detailed and time consuming business of defining ship characteristics without a concomitant increase in officer or clerical personnel. War planning was bound to suffer. Captain Thomas B. Howard of the Second Committee told the Board that the issuance of

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41. Rodgers to Dewey, October 19, 1911, General Board File 425.
42. Meyer to Dewey, October 26, 1911, General Board File 425.

war plans was being delayed because of the shortage of clerks.[43]

A more serious indictment was made by Lieutenant Commander Ridley McLean:

> the condition of the navy as regards war plans must be regarded as deplorable. A safe full of so-called 'war plans' consists really of plans for a landing party seizing certain ports; and our present organization is such that we can hope for no speedy relief. A committee of three of the General Board is charged with this, as one of numerous other duties. But when we consider war plans, plans which should be prepared and ready for instant use in case war is declared with Orange or Black [Japan or Germany], or Yellow; plans of campaign including all the questions which are the subject of laborious discussions during certain entire sessions at the college, - what can three men, even if uninterrupted, accomplish?[44]

McLean's opinion was shared by another Board officer, Bradley A. Fiske. He found the war plans

> so general in character as barely to be war plans at all, and to consist mainly of information of all kinds concerning various countries, accompanied with suggestions for the commander-in-chief of the fleet.[45]

While the estimates of McLean and Fiske showed that the Board performance as a war planning agency left much to be desired, they are understandable; the small staff of the General Board had never

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43. General Board Minutes, May 26, 1909, Vol. 3, p. 342.
44. Memorandum by Lieutenant Commander Ridley McLean, September, 1910, William S. Sims Papers, Office of Naval History, Washington, D. C.
45. Bradley A. Fiske, From Midshipman to Rear Admiral, (New York: The Century Co., 1919), p. 477.

expanded since its establishment yet it had many more duties than in 1[illegible] and was attempting to plan a war involving a Navy which had tripled in size in ten years. However, even with an expanded Board and more detailed documents, there remained a more pressing problem: how to support the plans logistically.

The General Board was not long in existence before it found that the business of war planning was little more than a classroom exercise without the means of implementation. What good was a plan which called for the mining of a harbor when the Bureau of Ordnance was unable or unwilling to provide the mines? The Haiti-Santo Domingo plan alone called for the use of 173 mines when there were less than 100 in the entire Navy.[46] The Martinique plan was delivered to the Commander-in-Chief of the North Atlantic Fleet with the notation that it could not be executed due to lack of forces.[47]

Attempts by the Board to establish depots of war reserve supplies for use in the seizure of advanced bases met with great resistance. The bureaus were reluctant to press Congress for the necessary appropriations to fund the material since they felt that it might result in an equivalent reduction in a bureau-sponsored project. When the General Board recommended in 1906 that the Secretary ask Congress for money to procure 6,000 emergency army rations for the use of

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46. General Board Minutes, September 22, 1903, Vol. 1, p. 332.
47. General Board Minutes, October 27, 1903, Vol. 1, p. 354.

advanced base forces in the event of war, he declined arguing that the procurement might be misinterpreted by the public, the President, and Congress as an indication that the Navy would soon become engaged in offensive military operations, and the occupation of foreign and/or neutral territory.[48]

After struggling with this problem of war plan support for over eleven years, the Board was able to win Secretary of the Navy George Meyer's approval of a system designed to integrate the bureaus in the war planning process. At the request of the Board, Meyer addressed letters to each one of the bureau chiefs in which he described a war situation derived from one of the General Board's war plans. The bureaus were directed to submit to the Secretary a statement, explaining how they intended to apply their specialties to the plan's requirements, and asking what steps the Secretary could take to assist. In addition, the bureaus were directed to designate a representative to maintain liaison with the General Board for war plan affairs.[49] While the system did not guarantee bureau cooperation, it at least made it plainly evident to the Secretary their degree of support. As a matter of fact bureau response was generally good although one waited 13 months before submitting a reply.[50]

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48. General Board Minutes, September 26, 1906, Vol. 2, p. 460.
49. General Board File 425, May 24, 1911.
50. Secnav to Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, June 25, 1912, General Board File 425.

Th- General Board tried to prepare plans for many contingencies : the two which most occupied it were those predicated on wars th Japan and Germany. The documents reflecting the Board's nking on these two probabilities were euphemistically described as e Orange Plan (Japan) and the Black Plan (Germany). They are scussed below, not only because they were based on probable s opposed to possible), eventualities, but because they are among e last plans formulated by the General Board and therefore pre- mably the most sophisticated.[51]

Each of the plans contained a Strategic Section and an Admin- strative Section. The Orange Plan also had an Information Section omprising 165 pages of data on Japanese ports. The Black Plan had o such data undoubtedly because the anticipated area of operations vas in the Caribbean, while the war against Japan was to be waged n the Pacific more or less adjacent to Japan. In addition, the Orange Plans, unlike the Black, envisioned the possibility of U. S. naval operations against Japanese harbors after the destruction of the Japanese fleet.[52]

The material in the Orange Plan Information Section was based on data supplied by the Office of Naval Intelligence and included

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51. Not all of the General Board War Plans developed during the 1900 to 1915 period are preserved; the practice was apparently to discard old plans as new ones were promulgated.
52. War Portfolio No. 2, Reference No. 5-I, Orange Plan, Information Section, General Board War Plans File, Box No. 6, p. 1.

sailing charts, photographs of prominent landmarks, and descriptions of fortifications and other military facilities. A typical (although somewhat briefer than average) entry was that for the Goto Islands off the western coast of Kyushu:

> There are no defenses in these islands, and but a small population (estimated at 200) available for military service. They are fishermen, without present training.
>
> The harbor of Tama No Ura will safely accomodate 20 large ships and 30 small ones, in anchorages safe from heavy weather. Hostile vessels outside might fire on ships inside and north of Kojima. Outside anchorages off the villages of Tama and Arakawa would be secure in any weather except N. W. gales.
>
> The conditions of the immediate surroundings would permit the seizure by us of this anchorage. There are excellent facilities for a temporary defense requiring no longer than 48 hours.
>
> A powerful radio installation here, coupled with telegraphic communication to Fukaye (4000 inhabitants) and cable to Nagasaki would insure immediate knowledge of an attack by us.[53]

The ultimate aim of the Strategic Section was to come to a decision as to the best course of action for the United States fleet to pursue prior to and immediately after the outbreak of war. Following a discussion of the conditions which might provoke a war, the plans presented some general assumptions upon which the Board based its reasoning. In both the Orange and Black Plans, it was

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53. War Portfolio No. 2, Reference No. 5-I, Orange Plan, Information Section, General Board War Plans File, Box No. 6, p. 1.

ssumed that Japan and Germany would initiate the conflicts and,
eca. of the comparative unreadiness of the United States for war,
e in positions of marked superiority. The plans then provided
tudied comparisons of the forces involved, possible courses of
ction on both sides, probable enemy decisions, and finally a listing
f the best options open to the United States forces.[54]

At the conclusion of the strategic discussion, the Board offered
list of specific actions which should be taken by naval forces when
ar became imminent or immediately after it had commenced. To
llustrate, the Orange Plan called for the Navy's Asiatic Forces
hich were on station at the outbreak of war to:

> (a) Remove the drydock and naval utilities from Olongapo [Philippines] to a position behind the defenses of Manila Bay.
> (b) Assemble in Manila Bay the MONTERY, MONADNOCK and all cruisers, destroyers, and submarines on the station.
> (c) Put out of commission all river gunboats except PALOS and MONOCACY. Utilize the personnel thus made avaliable as crews for monitors, destroyers, and submarines.
> (d) That the Commander-in-chief of the Asiatic Station will employ this force in cooperation with the Army for the destruction of enemy forces and the defenses of the entrance to Manila Bay til the arrival of the Blue [United States] main body.
> (e) The defense of Guam should be obstinate and prolonged to the utmost limit, in order that Orange, in case of success, may be allowed as little time as possible to strengthen the fortifications against attack by the Blue Fleet on its way to the Philippines. The time element here is vital.[55]

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54. War Portfolio No. 1, Reference No. 5-Y, Black Plan, General Board War Plans File, Box No. 10, pp. 1-71; War Portfolio No. 2, Reference No. 5-I, Orange Plan, General Board War Plans File, Box No. 6, pp. 1-72.
55. Orange Plan, p. 76.

Some of the Black Plan's conclusions were: to maintain the active fleet so as to be prepared for battle within seven days after the declaration of war; to mobilize the fleet in the lower Chesapeake Bay on the advance of the German fleet toward the Caribbean, then direct it to proceed to Culebra off Puerto Rico; to concentrate the scouting effort in a "small area to the eastward of the Caribbean, and possibly in special area near the Azores."[56]

The last portion of both plans was called the Administrative section. Here the Board dealt with the logistics necessary to support strategy. The Board's appreciation of their inter-relationship was clearly expressed in the opening pages of the Orange Plan.

> The logical development of the strategy of a war with Orange demonstrates how absolutely all operations depend upon the logistics of the war - the exacting, ever present questions of equipment, supply and communications. No strategic study, in fact, is possible until it is definitely known, or can be assumed, what are the means provided to initiate the war and how complete the arrangements are to transfer the fleets and flotillas to the area of operations and then adequately to support them there against the assumed power and dispositions of the enemy. If the means are lacking to insure the arrival of the full naval strength of a country in the area where the decisive battles of the war must be fought, and to keep it adequately supplied in that area, it is as overpowering a national calamity as a decided inferiority in the equality of the personnel and in the number and character of the fighting ships.[57]

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56. Black Plan, p. 63.
57. Orange Plan, p. 1.

The Administrative section listed the projects which had to be accomplished by the Navy Department bureaus and offices in advance of war in order to ensure the successful deployment of the fleet. The Board considered that:

> the work outlined must be done thoroughly to ensure success; and only by adequate preparation well in advance of hostilities will it be practicable to act offensively upon a scale that the military and naval power of the enemy makes imperative. The time element is all important, and a delay in the sailing of the fleet, and further delays in reinforcing and maintaining the fleet may result in disaster... ."[58]

Several examples of the hundreds of elements of logistics support included in the Board's plans follow:

- Bureau of Supplies and Accounts: to make arrangements for a supply of 1,200,000 tons of coal and 175,000 tons of oil "when war anticipated" and thereafter, monthly deliveries of 250,000 tons of coal and 50,000 tons of oil.[59]

- Bureau of Navigation: to issue preparatory orders to all retired officers capable of performing duty.[60]

- Bureau of Ordnance: be able on three weeks notice to load two mine depot ships to full capacity.[61]

- Solicitor General: prepare blank forms to use for the expediting of the delivery of vessels already being built for the Navy.[62]

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58. Orange Plan, Administrative Section, p. 1; Black Plan, p. 146.
59. Orange Plan, Administrative Section, p. 29.
60. Black Plan, p. 160.
61. Orange Plan, Administrative Section, p. 70.
62. Black Plan, p. 189.

None of the General Board's War Plans were ever tested in the crucible of conflict. Its most advanced effort, the Black Plan prepared in 1914, was based on the assumption that the United States would have to defend by itself a German onslaught in the Caribbean. The Board never anticipated that the American effort would be combined with Great Britain's many miles across the Atlantic. Nevertheless, the Board's development of a system of war planning in peace did much to create within the naval service an awareness of the complexities of modern naval warfare.

CHAPTER V

THE ENEMIES

It would have been very strange indeed if the General Board, chartered as it was for the production of war plans, did not find an enemy against which to prepare. Actually from the point of view of the plans themselves, there was no shortage of adversaries. Every world power at one time or another was placed in the role of aggressor, but none received more attention than Germany for it stood out in the minds of the board members as the most probable foe.

U.S. naval preoccupation with Germany did not begin with the General Board. American officers had long suspected, with some justification, that their German counterparts had designs on the Caribbean, and were therefore somewhat surprised that the settlement after the Franco-German War did not include the cession of the French-owned island of Martinique.[1] In 1897, the Naval War College debated the possibility of a U.S.-German confrontation and concluded

1. Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce, "A Short Study in Naval Strategy," lecture delivered August 27, 1910 at Naval War College, Naval War College Archives, Newport, R.I.; Alfred Vagts, "Hopes and Fears of an American-German War, 1870-1915" Part I, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 54 (December, 1939), p. 515.

that one could conceivably arise in Haiti over the question of forceful German intervention to protect the interest of the many German subjects residing there. Such an episode, it was felt, would give Germany an excuse to achieve a foothold in the Caribbean and thus challenge the Monroe Doctrine.[2]

Although the scene of future conflict between the two countries was invariably placed in the Western Hemisphere, American naval officers found confirmation of German hostility in events in the Far East. The first of these to give credence to the prospect of war was the German-American dispute over Samoa in 1888-1889.[3] American naval officers sent there during the "crisis" found ample evidence of German intrigue.[4] Beginning with the Spanish-American War and continuing through 1899 American naval strategists found that, "at every disputed strategic point in the Pacific, Germany contested the American wishes ...."[5] Perhaps the most significant dramatization of this was the highly publicized dispute between Admirals George Dewey and Otto von Diederichs in Manila Bay soon after the destruction of the feeble Spanish fleet. Many of the General Board members

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2. "War with Germany," prepared at Naval War College in 1897, author unknown, Naval War College Archives.
3. Vagts, "Hopes and Fears of an American-German War 1870-1915," p. 517.
4. Rear Admiral L. A. Kimberly, "Samoan Hurricane," Naval Historical Foundation Publication, 1965, p. 3.
5. William C. Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958), p. 63.

during the period from 1900 to 1914 were there with Dewey and, like [illegible], gained an indelible impression of German aggressiveness and bellicosity. Dewey and his officers viewed von Diederichs large force (outnumbering theirs), and their activities as malapropros particularly when compared with the honorable and circumspect performance of the British naval vessels under Captain Edward Chichester.[6]

One of these Manila Bay veterans was Commander Nathan Sargent. He was a long time associate of Dewey and had been his Aide when the latter was President of the Board of Inspection and Survey from 1895 to 1897.[7] Under Dewey's guidance, Sargent wrote a history of the Battle of Manila Bay which reflects the bitterness aroused by the German naval activities under Admiral von Diederichs.[8] Sargent became a member of the General Board in 1902, stayed until 1904, took command of the U.S.S. Baltimore in the Far East, and returned to the Board in 1906. A frequent correspondent with Dewey, Sargent evidences the permancy of his anti-German bias in this letter to Dewey written almost seven years after the event:

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6. Thomas A. Bailey, "Dewey and the Germans at Manila Bay," American Historical Review, Vol. 45 (October, 1939), pp. 59-81; Commander Nathan Sargent, Admiral Dewey and the Manila Campaign, (Washington: Naval Historical Foundation, 1947).
7. Lewis R. Hamersly, The Records of Living Officers of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, (New York: L.R. Hamersly Co., 1902), p. 213.
8. Sargent, Admiral Dewey and the Manila Campaign, (Washington: Naval Historical Foundation, 1947).

> The last German Vice Admiral to visit Manila was your friend Von Diederichs, and since then his countrymen have had the good taste to stay away from the locality in which they had been guilty of such bad breeding and had so persistently ignored your authority. Now however their Flagship FURST Bismark, with Vice Admiral Von Pritwitz on board, has been at Hongkong for the last two months, but had so effectually worn out her welcome there that the English took away her buoy off the city and forced her to anchor down by Kowloon. In consequence her Vice Admiral decided to visit Manila, and with the usual German finesse he timed his visit to coincide with the birthday of the Kaiser. There have been many entertainments in his honor, among others a dinner given on board the Flagship by Admiral Stirling. Of course there is no objection in extending to the Germans the customary courtesies, but our people have slopped over a little too much, and today the culminating point, and one which has excited a deal of comment, has been, the unusual honors paid to the Germans by our Fleet. ... By the way, while on the subject of the Germans, as an evidence of their tact and good sea manners, I was informed by the English Officers at Hongkong, that while enjoying the hospitality of that place for nearly the whole winter and making its harbor a rendezvous for the German squadron, they had noticed that when the German ships ran in or out of port they exercised their batteries by training their guns on the fortifications of the port; this was told me by the English General in command and I only wonder that the English did not fire on them. However this does not equal their conduct in the Hebrides last summer when they took bearings and soundings of the whole locality, they sent parties of men ashore to thoroughly explore the Islands, noted the best strategic points, the facilities for procuring food and water, etc., etc., evidently with a view of seizing the island for a temporary base in case of hostilities... . P.S. Jan 28th. The German Flagship has passed the fleet standing out to sea and showing that her Admiral came here largely for the purpose of having us honor his Kaiser. Had he possessed a modicum of tact he would have remained a day or two longer.[9]

Dewey shared Sargent's mistrust of the Germans. The incidents at Manila Bay enraged him to the point where he actually threatened

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9. Sargent to Dewey, January 27, 1905, Dewey Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

the Germans with war.[10] On his return voyage to the United States predicted that "our next war will be with Germany."[11] After the Venezuelan "crisis" of 1902-1903, he disparaged the capability of the German Navy, and although he did not intend that his remarks be published, they received wide circulation in the American and German press. President Theodore Roosevelt tactfully chided Dewey for "giving the impression that as a nation we are walking about with a chip on our shoulder,"[12] but he privately endorsed Dewey's remarks and told him "much more than ... [the latter] had said to the newspapers."[13] Another member of the General Board, Captain Charles S. Sperry, held the Kaiser in great contempt and likened him to "one of the Robber Barons of the Middle Ages."[14]

With this background it is not surprising to find that a high degree of germanophobia was present in the early thinking of the General Board. Even prior to the first meeting Captain Henry C. Taylor suggested that the Board's first task should be to analyze the possibility of an attempt by Germany to seize territory in the Caribbean or South America.[15] Captain Charles D. Sigsbee, a Board member and Chief of the Office of Naval Intelligence, responded with

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10. Bailey, "Dewey and the Germans at Manila Bay," p. 67.
11. New York Herald, July 29, 1899, cited in Ibid., p. 79.
12. Roosevelt to Dewey, April 3, 1903, Dewey Papers.
13. Dewey to son George, April 7, 1903, Dewey Collection, Office of Naval History.
14. Rear Admiral Charles S. Sperry to son Charles, May 1, 1905, Sperry Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
15. Dewey to Rear Admiral Arent S. Crowinshield, April 11, 1900, with Taylor memorandum attached, General Board File 401.

the estimate that Germany intended to acquire territory in the Caribbean and/or South America "in one way or another." The possibilities included possession by force, purchase, consent of an ally, absorption of Denmark and Holland and subsequent accession of the Caribbean territories of these two countries. In Sigsbee's view, Germany's preference would be to gain a foothold without resort to arms, but if this were not possible then she would not hesitate to go to war, for her strategy demanded a permanent base in the West Indes to further her colonization aims, to protect her South American and Caribbean commerce, and to operate against the United States fleet should war come. Germany coveted territory in Brazil, Culebra, Cuba, Santo Domingo, Haiti, St. Thomas, Santa Cruz, and Curacao. Her greatest interest was thought to be Haiti, based principally on the frequent visits of German naval training vessels there, the splendid harbor sites available, and the weak position of the Haitien government, both politically and militarily.[16]

Another officer who made frequent strategic studies for the General Board in the early 1900's, believed that Germany's aim was to "obtain a chian of naval bases across the Atlantic and Pacific, trending through the American Isthmus, no link of which would be as long as that between Hawaii and Guam." He felt that, in support

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16. Office of Naval Intelligence Memorandum, "Germany vs. the U.S. - West Indes," May 21, 1900, General Board File Box 11.

of this objective, Germany would try to acquire either the Azores or Madeiras and territory in the West Indes, probably St. Thomas.[17]

Captain French E. Chadwick, President of the Naval War College and a Board member for almost four years, believed that "war is the outcome of commercial rivalry."[18] He looked on Germany as a state plagued by a crisis of overproduction which could only be relieved by further colonization. This would probably take place in Southern Brazil and present the United States with a challenge to the Monroe Doctrine.[19]

Captain Charles S. Sperry, a prominent Board member, saw the seeds of conflict present in Latin America where on the one hand the was a large amount of German capital investment and on the other political instability caused by "rotten Latin-American despotisms." He predicted that "sooner or later" Germany would "rise up in arms to protect and extend her interests."[20]

Rear Admiral Taylor, the most influential of the Board members in the first few years of its existence was convinced in 1902 that the

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17. Lieutenant John M. Ellicott, "Sea Power of Germany," unpublished mss. written at Naval War College in 1900, Naval War College Archives.
18. Captain French E. Chadwick, "The Naval War College." lecture delivered at the Naval War College, March 4, 1902, Naval War College Archives.
19. Chadwick, "Coal," lecture delivered at Naval War College, 1901, Naval War College Archives. Chadwick went on to recommend to his officers that they read Brooks Adams, whose philosophy that commercial rivalry lay at the basis of all wars, was his philosophy too.
20. Sperry to wife, August 6, 1901, Sperry Papers.

United States and Germany would have a conflict in the not too distant future.[21] He and his colleagues were reportedly "alert" to the German "danger" and "pretty well scared over the Monroe Doctrine. . . ."[22]

In view of these individual estimates it comes as no surprise that the entire Board officially advised the Secretary of the Navy in 1906 that:

> Germany is desirous of extending her colonial possessions. Especially, is it thought, that she is desirous of obtaining a foothold in the Western Hemisphere, and many things indicate that she has her eyes on localities in the West Indies, on the shores of the Caribbean, and in parts of South America. It is believed in many quarters that she is planning to test the Monroe Doctrine by the annexation or by the establishment of a protectorate over a portion of South America, even going to the extent of war with the United States when her fleet is ready.[23]

These convictions as to the German threat were reinforced and made even more credible by statements of leading State Department officials like Assistant Secretary of State Francis B. Loomis who told the officers at the Naval War College "in confidence" that:

> Personal conversations with, and observations on the part of divers European statesmen, diplomats, which have been reported to me at first hand, lead me to believe that the question of acquiring some sort of definite foot-hold in South

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21. Army and Navy Journal, August 9, 1902, Vol. 29, p. 1246.
22. Lieutenant Alfred P. Niblack to Lieutenant William S. Sims, December 29, 1901, Sims Papers, Office of Naval History, Washington, D. C.
23. Dewey to Secnav, June 20, 1906, General Board File 438.

> America has not been wholly excluded from the thought of certain governments in connection with their plans for commercial political expansion. What has been done in the way of giving effect to this thought, has, I fancy, been purely tentative in character, but the possibility of a European nation seeking by the indirect method of its own colonization associated to gain a political foot-hold in South America is something not wholly fanciful. This is a contingency which offers one of the most intricate and delicate problems that can be suggested by our future relations in Latin-America. The ultimate fate, declaration, scope and interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine is indisolubly connected with it.[24]

As if to demonstrate its impartiality, the General Board did analyze the possibility of conflict with Latin America countries, France, and England. The nations of the American hemisphere were quickly eliminated as serious challengers because of their weakness as compared to the United States.[25] England was not deemed a probable aggressors because she was "particularly cordial, largely for reasons of sentiment, kinship, ... but even more so for reasons of self interest."[26] Indeed, the Board believed that in the event of war with Germany, it was "not at all unlikely" that the United States would be able "to secure the passive friendship of England, and probably, if necessary, a treaty of mutual support and

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24. Francis B. Loomis, "The Influence of an Isthmian Canal Upon Central and South America," lecture delivered at Naval War College, 1901, Naval War College Archives.
25. War Portfolio No. 1, Atlantic Station, "General Considerations and Data," General Board File Box 1, p. 1-a(1).
26. Ibid.

protection. . . ."[27] The chance of war with France was also considered remote largely because of that nation's "unusually friendly" posture.[28] Equally improbable in the estimate of the Board members was an Anglo-French alliance against the United States.[29]

Thus the Board's logic of elimination left only one realistic foe in the Atlantic - Germany - described by the Board as "the nation most likely to engage in war single handed with the United States. . . ."[30] This confrontation, described in the color code system as "Black vs. Blue"(Germany vs. United States), would begin with the occupation of "Western Hemisphere territory under the Black Flag."[31] The Board's rationale supporting this conclusion was officially presented in War Portfolio Number 1 as follows:

> Germany is the uneasy state of Europe. With a population of 60,641,000 in 1905, the annual increment is near 900,000. Since 1870 the population has increased at an average rate of 1.14% and it is not a matter of many years before she will

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27. Dewey to Secnav, June 20, 1906, General Board File 438. Despite these strong expressions of anglophilia, the Board would not go so far as to support a continuance or extension of the Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1817, delimiting naval armaments on the Great Lakes. On the contrary, it advised the Secretary of State through the Secretary of the Navy that it would be preferable to abrogate the agreement entirely to permit the United States to "inaugurate a shipbuilding policy for the Great Lakes, whereby the United States may, if so inclined, always have an armed force on the Great Lakes, greater than the Canadian armed force." Secnav to Secretary of State, February 28, 1906, General Board File 420. Letter drafted by the General Board.
28. "General Considerations and Data," p. 1-a(2).
29. Ibid., p. 1-a(3).
30. "General Considerations and Data," p. 1-a(4).
31. "Germany War Plan," p. 10 (revised).

> have outgrown her borders. Expansion is therefore a necessity that becomes more pressing with every year that passes and it is evident that the German government is fully alive to the situation. Thus far Germany has not been fortunate with her colonies and the temperate regions of the world that are feebly held have not been preempted. In South America there are rich localities in a temperate climate that might be seized from the holding nations were they the only obstacles, and in southern Brazil there is already a large community of Germans. But the Monroe Doctrine stands in the way of such an enterprise which may not unreasonably be assumed to be unfair to the German mind in view of their problem of over-population. It also stands in the way of their getting a foothold in the Caribbean which would be desirable for trade reasons if for no other. When in addition it is recalled that the United States was largely instrumental in preventing the partition of China, it is seen that there are latent causes that render a break with Germany more probable than with either of the other two great maritime powers [France and England], and more probable moreover than with any other European power.[32]

Having constructed what to it was an adequate basis for the German "threat," the General Board looked and saw present all around confirming evidence that its view was a correct one. First came the German Fleet Law of 1900 which called for a tremendous expansion in naval tonnage so that by 1917, the German Navy would have a total of 422,000 tons - a figure far greater than the entire American Navy of 1900. To make matters more ominous, the Office of Naval Intelligence received confidential information that the program would be accelerated to completion some nine years earlier than provided by the law.[33]

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32. "General Considerations and Data," pp. 1-a(2)-1a(3).
33. Ellicott, "Sea Power of Germany," Naval War College Archives.

In March of 1901 Commander Nathan Sargent, then Commanding Officer of U.S.S. Scorpion filed a report indicating that the visit of the German cruiser Vineta to the Margarita Islands off Venezuela presaged their acquisition by Germany. Sargent's belief was based on the unusually long hydrographic survey made by the ship (three months), his understanding that the operations were being conducted at the personal direction of the Kaiser, and the widely held opinion in Venezuela that when the Congress met in September of 1901, it would lease or sell the islands to Germany.[34] Although Venezuela denied that the transfer would take place,[35] Sargent's observations became the source of widespread concern within the Board.[36]

Further evidence of the German conspiracy was offered by Commander John E. Pillsbury. He wrote Rear Admiral Taylor and enclosed a clipping from a Port of Spain, Trinidad newspaper which announced the arrival of a German Caribbean cruise ship with many American tourists and "six guests of the German Emperor" aboard. Pillsbury revealed that the "six guests" were actually German army officers in search of military information. He added that it was his impression that Germany "means to put all the pressure possible on Venezuela."[37] Taylor, expressing great confidence in Pillsbury's

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34. Henry Cabot Lodge to John D. Long, June 1, 1901, printed in Gardner W. Allen, ed., Papers of John Davis Long, (Boston: The Massachusetts Historical Society), Vol. 78, p. 366.
35. Ibid.
36. Dewey to Secnav, April 24, 1901, General Board File 409.
37. Commander John E. Pillsbury to Taylor, January 16, 1902, copy in Dewey Papers.

judgment, relayed the letter to Dewey and described its contents as significant "of the general trend of events."[38]

The visit of the Kaiser's brother, Prince Henry, to the United States in February of 1902 was apparently a sincere attempt on the part of the German government to heal the wounds inflicted at Manila, ease the suspicion about German intentions in South America and the Caribbean, and generally contribute to a lessening of the tensions evident in German-American relations.[39] However, it was welcomed by Rear Admiral Taylor not for these reasons but because it would postpone the inevitable war between the two countries and give the United States Navy more time to prepare.[40]

There is no documentation available which reflects the Board's reaction to the Venezuelan "crisis" of 1902-1903, but it is virtually certain that it was viewed as another demonstration of German aggressiveness, irrespective of the fact that it was the English who took the lead in the movement to coerce Venezuela.[41] The Board probably shared President Roosevelt's conviction that German actions were aimed at converting a Venezuelan harbor into a Caribbean Kiauchau for the purpose of "exercising some degree of control over

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38. Taylor to Dewey, January 31, 1902, Dewey Papers.
39. Howard C. Hill, Roosevelt And The Caribbean, (New York: Russell and Russell, 1965), p. 113; Rear Admiral Robley D. Evans, An Admiral's Log, (New York: D. Appelton and Co., 1910), p. 77. Evans, while a member of the General Board, was assigned by President Roosevelt as Prince Henry's escort officer during the visit.
40. Taylor to Dewey, January 31, 1902, Dewey Papers.
41. Hill, Roosevelt And The Caribbean, p. 110.

the future Isthmian Canal and over South American affairs generally."[42]

After the Venezuelan incident, reports and rumors continued to flow into the Board detailing German efforts to establish bases throughout the Caribbean. All, regardless of their basis in fact, were accepted as proof of the Board's thesis as to the coming German-American confrontation. In December, 1903 the Commandant of the U. S. Naval Station at San Juan Puerto Rico reported that the German government had purchased land for a coaling station in St. Thomas.[43] In the same month State Department sources forwarded an evaluation from the American Consul at St. Thomas that Germany had leased Water Island just outside the port of Charlotte Amalie and had fleet ammunition stored in the government arsenal on the main island.[44]

So pathological was the suspicion of Germany that even casual social conversations were reported as events of great significance. Commander Nathan Sargent was told by an American in Shanghai that the Germans in Peking invariably "assured their British friends that the German naval preparations were by no means directed against

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42. Roosevelt to William R. Thayer, August 21, 1916, cited in Hill, Roosevelt And The Caribbean, p. 123.
43. Commandant, U. S. Naval Station, Puerto Rico serial 647-03, December 12, 1903, General Board File 429.
44. General Board Minutes, December 20, 1904, Vol. 2, p. 89. Later a clarification was received from the American Consul in Copenhagen to the effect that it was the German-owned American-Hamburg Line which had leased Water Island; the ammunition report had no basis in fact. Report from American Consul at Copenhagen, October 4, 1905, General Board File 429.

England but were meant for any eventuality with the United States and that the pretext would be the question of the Brazil Colonies." The American added that the Germans, "when in their cups," often referred to the conflict with the United States and "apparently regarded it as inevitable." Sargent transmitted this information to Dewey with the comment that:

> I know your opinions on the subject but I only hope that in some manner this undoubted intention of theirs can be so imparted to Congress that its members will be convinced that there should be no let up in our appropriations.[45]

Dewey agreed with Sargent's opinion relative to the Germans, and promised to do all in his power to see that the United States was prepared.[46]

Even the routine decommissioning of the German battleship Kaiser Friedrich III for damage repair prompted excited reaction in Board circles. The U.S. Naval Attache report that the loss of the ship for a six month period generated considerable concern on the part of the German naval officers, caused the Chief Intelligence Officer, Captain Charles D. Sigsbee to warn the General Board that the reaction of these officers proved that Germany had war plans which counted on the use of the Kaiser Friedrich III during the time she would be undergoing repair.[47]

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45. Sargent to Dewey, December 10, 1904, Dewey Papers.
46. Dewey to Sargent, February 1, 1905.
47. Sigsbee to Dewey, May 17, 1901, cited in Seward W. Livermore, "American Naval Development 1898-1914 With Special Reference to Foreign Affairs," (Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1942), p. 53.

To the General Board, German commercial penetration in the Western Hemisphere was simply a cover for subsequent naval incursions, and it was watched with concern and suspicion. In April of 1906 Admiral Dewey received a report from the Commanding Officer of U.S.S. Nashville, Commander Washington I. Chambers, in which he touched on the German "menace" in Santo Domingo. He told Dewey that Germans were very influential in the Macoris area and investing in rather extensive land holdings. He also sent along a copy of a letter from Mr. L. Pardo, agent of the Clyde Steamship Company in Santo Domingo City and endorsed the latter's views relative to the German ambitions in the Caribbean. Pardo ranked Germany as the number one enemy of the United States whose objective was to "destroy the Monroe Doctrine." Pardo wrote:

> What is to prevent Germany from buying up British, Spanish, Belgian, and other claims and making a demand on the Dominican Government for immediate payment? And as such not be made, taking possession of Custom Houses, and Samana Bay as a guarantee. Should this happen, our Government would have to satisfy German claims by paying same, or by force prevent Germany from taking possession ... in order to uphold the Monroe Doctrine. This would mean war.[48]

In June of 1910, in reaction to reports about German commercial leases in Haiti, the General Board persuaded Secretary of the Navy George von L. Meyer to take the position that:

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48. Chambers to Dewey, April 9, 1906, General Board File 413.

> any such lease carried out in the Western Hemisphere would, in effect, be almost, if not quite, as prejudicial to the safety and interests of this country, as though the lease were made direct to a foreign government. Especially is this true in the case of places located on or near the trade routes in either ocean to or from the Panama Canal in any direction.[49]

In April of 1913, the American Charge' d'Affaires in Colombia, Leland Harrison advised the Secretary of State that he learned in a conversation with "one of the minor officials of the Imperial German Legation" that the German banana concession operating on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Uraba in Colombia was "ostensibly for the purpose of furnishing cargo for ... German steamers, but the real reason of the undertaking is due to ... [the] desire to possess a coaling station ... in the Caribbean, where England, France, and the United States are already well supplied with naval bases." Harrison evaluated the report as tending "to confirm the suspicions previously voiced by the Legation to the effect that the German interests in the Gulf of Uraba ... were rather political then commercial in character."[50] Later the American Consul in Barranquilla, Colombia seconded Harrison's contention by advising that the banana concession was "a cloak to the efforts of the German Government to secure a fuel station ... ." He based his belief on the fact that the port construction was being done by German army engineers, that the banana

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49. Meyer to Secretary of State, June 21, 1910, General Board File 429.
50. Leland Harrison to Secretary of State, Number 158, April 30, 1913, General Board File 429.

industry in the area was not a paying proposition, and that the Ger-n 's were using their presence to exploit for petroleum deposits.[51]

The General Board's reaction was not one of surprise for in its estimate it simply confirmed its long held analysis of German strategic objectives. It was of the opinion that Germany wanted the coaling station not to supply its cargo vessels but as a military base of operations. The Board went on to state that:

> the desire of Germany to have a coaling station in the Caribbean is as natural as is the desire of the United States not to have Germany so established in that region. France and England had possessions in the Caribbean before the United States came into being, and the enunciation of the Monroe Doctrine did not contemplate turning them out. But the advent now of Germany in that region, in any way giving her a position of military advantage, is opposed to the principle of the Monroe Doctrine and is a potential menace to the security of the United States, and especially to the Panama Canal and her other interests in the Caribbean... .[52]

The Board also received frequent reports on the conspiratorial colonization policy of Germany in Southern Brazil, describing the German immigrants as "tightly knit, and willing and anxious to revolt and accept the position of German colonies of the Empire."[53]

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51. Isaac Manning to Secretary of State, Number 234, May 31, 1913, General Board File 429.
52. Dewey to Secnav, June 14, 1913, General Board File 429; General Board Minutes, June 13, 1913, Vol. 5, p. 113.
53. Sperry to son Charles, January 17, 1908, Sperry Papers. Sperry was one of the Board members who shared this belief. During the cruise of the "Great White Fleet" from 1907 to 1909, he stopped at Rio de Janeiro and said that he was "glad to hear" that people there completely disavowed the plot, "for in the G. B. [General Board] we always had in view German attempts to acquire territory in those regions."

It is clear that the General Board identified Germany as the most l. .y aggressor in the Atlantic area and found acceptable evidence to confirm its findings. But this did not mean that Germany had the capability to wage war against the United States, nor did it serve to show whether or not or when it would be in Germany's best interests to do battle. In order to find the answer to these questions, the Board members put themselves in the chairs of their German counterparts, and analyzed the situation as they thought it appeared from across the Atlantic. Among the possible German objectives were the possession of territory in: the United States, Puerto Rico, Panama Canal Zone, West Indes, the Caribbean littoral, and South America.[54]

The fear of a full scale effort against the Atlantic coast of the United States was expressed in the early days of the General Board,[55] but gradually eliminated as a feasible course of action, principally because of the increased strength of U.S. coastal defenses.[56] By 1905, the Atlantic Coast retained interest only as a site for a possible diversionary raid to excite panic among the

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54. "General Considerations and Data," p. 1-b(5). Even before the Panama Canal was completed in August of 1915, the Board viewed it as a likely target.
55. Dewey to Secnav, March 22, 1901, General Board Letterpress Vol. 1, p. 185.
56. In this connection, it is interesting to note that German naval strategists had plans in April of 1901 calling for naval attacks in Cape Cod followed by raiding operations on East Coast cities. Vagts, "Hopes and Fears of an American-German War 1870-1915," Part II, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 55 (March, 1940), pp. 58-59.

population and concomitant demands for concentration of the fleet in home waters.[57]

South America, particularly the Brazilian coastal area, was high on the German list of priorities, but it was here that the United States was least able to project its seapower because of the great distances involved and the lack of supporting bases. The Board felt that the only hope for the United States in the event Germany chose South America as a target was the prospect of an alliance with Brazil against Germany which would give the United States the use of ports close to the scene of action.[58] In any event the Board, at least in its early days, gave considerable attention to this problem and concluded that U.S. naval power could not guarantee the inviolability of the Monroe Doctrine in the face of an enemy attack anywhere in the vast stretches of South American beyond the Amazon River.[59]

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57. "German War Plan," p. 263; "General Considerations and Data," p. 1-b(11).
58. "General Considerations and Data," p. 1-d(27).
59. General Board Minutes, April 24, 1901, Vol. 1, p. 75. The Board thinking bears a striking resemblance to a Mahan proposal of early 1901 in which he suggested that the United States draw a zone of interest around the countries adjacent to the Caribbean and give Europe a free hand in the rest of Latin America. Henry Cabot Lodge to Theodore Roosevelt, March 30, 1901, cited in George T. Davis, A Navy Second to None, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1940), p. 121, An additional suggestion to this effect was made by Assistant Secretary of State Francis B. Loomis in 1901 when he told the officers at the Naval War College that the United States should establish its "coast line" to include the Caribbean Sea in the Atlantic and Ecuador in the Pacific, and allow the European countries to "do as they chose" in the rest of South America. Francis B. Loomis, "The Influence of an Isthmian Canal upon Central and South America," lecture delivered at the Naval War College in 1901, Naval War College Archives.

What remained as possibilities - the West Indes, the Caribbean littoral, and the Panama Canal Zone - became for the General Board the probable German strategic objectives in the Western Hemisphere against which the American Navy had to prepare.[60]

The Board considered that for Germany to be successful in any of these aims, she would have to seize and hold territory in the Caribbean area. This could not be done with seapower alone; an overseas expedition of ships and troops would be needed. But to protect and support the land forces, Germany needed control of the sea and a protected base of operations near the objective area. Command of the sea could only be obtained by defeat of the U.S. fleet; but before the encounter, the base would have to be secured both to provide a safe refuge for the auxiliaries and to have a haven to which damaged vessels could proceed after the battle.[61]

Germany was assigned the capability to mount such an expedition even though it would require anywhere between 62 to 110 colliers to supply coal alone. The General Board concluded that German merchant shipping was so vast and well organized that it could really support the navy in the Caribbean and also transport and supply an army of 200,000 men.[62]

But under what circumstances would Germany attempt such an undertaking? In the view of the General Board, the German naval

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60. "Germany War Plan," p. 8.
61. "General Considerations and Data," p. 1-b(6).
62. "Germany War Plan," pp. 20-21.

strategists would not dare risk such a venture unless two conditions were satisfied: the homeland must be protected, diplomatically or militarily; and German forces must be at least on a parity with American forces.

The most serious limitation on German ability to apply force in the Caribbean was British seapower. The Board decided that it would be unreasonable to assume that Germany would attack unless she was either allied with Great Britain, or at the very least enjoyed her sympathy and received some assurance that she would receive a free hand in a campaign against the United States. To a lesser extent this was also true of France, but in any event, the Board thought it essential that the navy of any nation inimical to Germany had first to be neutralized before she would undertake a Caribbean campaign.[63]

But even assuming this complete freedom from fear of attack on the homeland while the navy was deployed overseas, there were other limitations on German naval strategy. Germany would not, in the opinion of the General Board, go on the offensive unless she could muster a force superior to, or at the very least, equal to U.S. strength. The General Board expressed it this way:

> it would be suicidal for Black [Germany] with a fleet only approximately equal to that of Blue [United States], and in

63. "Germany War Plan," p. 28.

> addition handicapped by the presence of the heavy train [auxiliary vessels] necessary for such distant operations, to attempt a descent upon ... the Caribbean. ... It may therefore be seriously doubted if Black under the assumed condition of readiness of Blue, would resort to hostilities to gain political ends when the chances of success are so minimized by Blue preparedness. Thus will readiness for war serve to prevent war.[64]

The key expression in this statement is: "under the assumed condition of readiness of Blue." The General Board in comparing relative strengths of the two powers applied qualitative as well as quantitative standards and found that the United States, while close to Germany in total tonnage, was in an unsatisfactory situation with respect to quality. While Germany could be ready with maximum d oyable force in a period of seven days after the declaration of war, it would take the United States Navy thirty days to prepare. Thus, between the seventh and thirtieth day, the United States would be in a position of marked inferiority to Germany and in serious danger of defeat.[65]

Comparative readiness was also seriously affected by the location of the American fleet. The worst possible situation which could occur would be a declaration of war by Germany when the American fleet was either divided between the Atlantic and Pacific, or largely stationed in the Pacific. In either case, the length of time it would take to fully mobilize and concentrate U. S. forces to meet Germany would

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64. "Germany War Plan," p. 65.
65. Ibid., p. 56.

be greatly extended. While the completion of the Canal would reduce th somewhat, it would still take longer than the thirty days thought to be necessary with the fleet disposed in the Atlantic.[66]

The Board therefore judged that, assuming security in home waters, Germany would launch her offensive if her seapower were quantitatively or qualitatively superior, or if the American forces were divided between the Pacific and Atlantic. With the majority of the fleet in the Pacific, or divided between the Pacific and Atlantic, Germany would first make a raid on the Atlantic coast to garner prestige, induce panic, and disrupt American commerce; then her forces would descend on Culebra, Puerto Rico, Guantanamo, and Colon. The Board was not very sanguine about the outcome, declaring that "these conditions are almost hopeless for Blue... ."[67]

With the U.S. fleet concentrated in the Atlantic, German forces would proceed via the Azores or Cape Verde Islands, occupy a base on the southeastern edge of the Caribbean Sea in the vicinity of Margarita Islands, then engage the U.S. Navy.[68]

Under the above conditions the best course of action for the United States would be to:

> remain on the defensive, covering in the most efficient manner Blue interests and possessions until ... approximate equality or superiority may be assured. It must be kept in mind that an unsuccessful action by an inferior Blue fleet

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66. "Germany War Plan," p. 65.
67. Ibid., p. 57.
68. Ibid., pp. 47-54.

against the Black fleet will give Black freedom of action and control of the sea for a considerable time, and probably prevent Blue ever approaching an equality of force with Black... .[69]

If Germany were to launch an attack while the U.S. fleet was concentrated in the Atlantic, in a high state of readiness, and about on a par with the German Navy, the best option for the Americans would be to mobilize forces at Culebra and be ready to meet the enemy as it entered the Caribbean. This plan is diagrammatically shown on the following page with the anticipated area of first engagement shown in red as the "zone of control."

The Board envisioned the possibility of concurrent operations in the Far East but concluded that they would be minor and would have "little effect upon the war." Besides Germany and the United States did not have enought forces to spare for simultaneous large scale actions in Asia.[70]

The conclusions which were drawn by the General Board from their study of the threat in the Atlantic were clear. If there was a likelihood of a German attack, do not divide the fleet or concentrate it in the Pacific. Take steps to ensure a more rapid mobilization of the Atlantic Fleet. Ensure a force level which will give the United States, at the very minimum, parity with the Germans from a

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69. "Germany War Plan," p. 27.
70. Ibid., p. 65.

Strategic Positions. Black & Blue

Distances Approximate (see table) within 50 miles

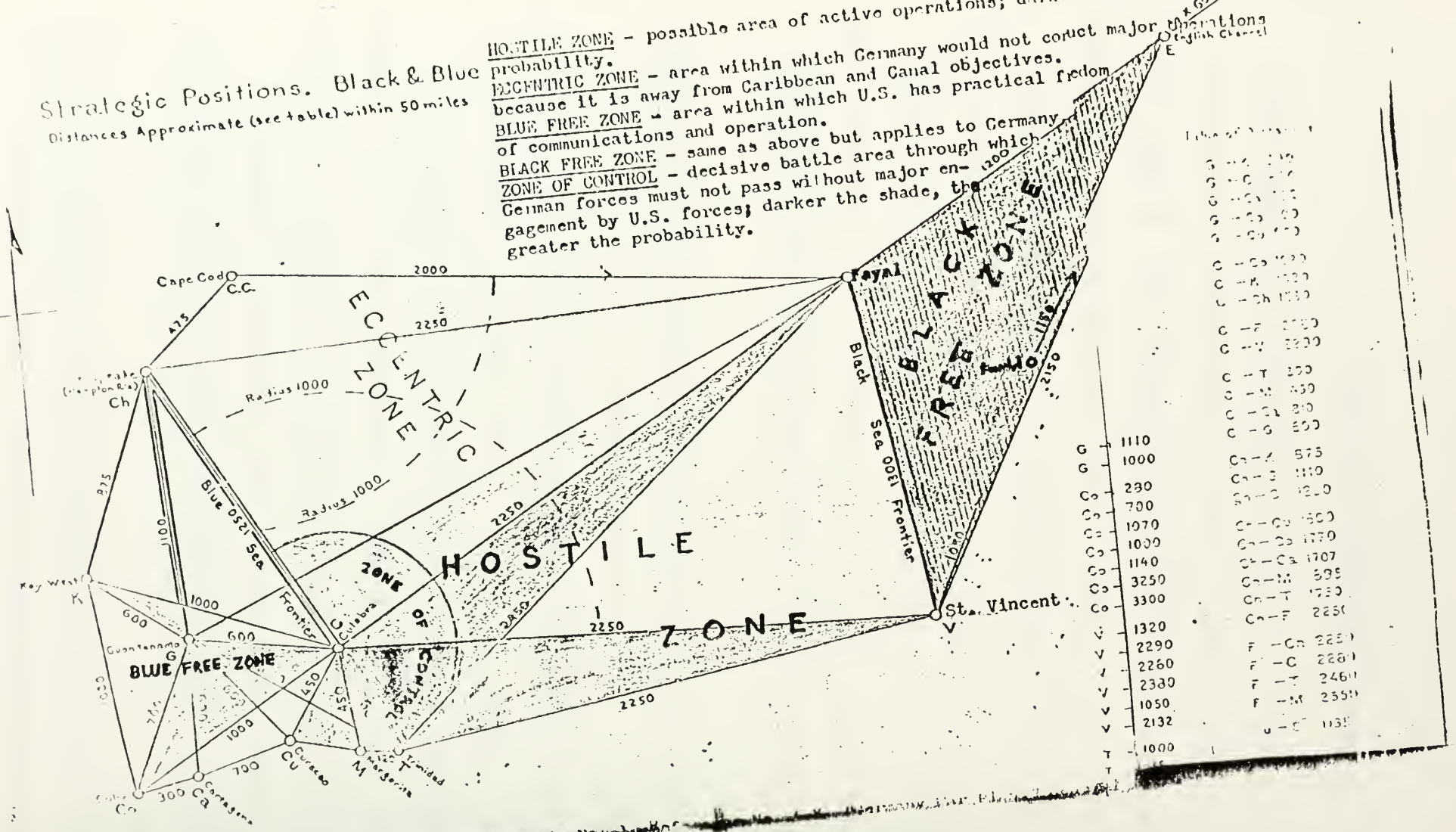
HOSTILE ZONE - possible area of active operations; darker the shade, the greater the probability.

ECCENTRIC ZONE - area within which Germany would not conuct major operations because it is away from Caribbean and Canal objectives.

BLUE FREE ZONE - area within which U.S. has practical fredom of communications and operation.

BLACK FREE ZONE - same as above but applies to Germany.

ZONE OF CONTROL - decisive battle area through which German forces must not pass without major engagement by U.S. forces; darker the shade, the greater the probability.



G	1110	
G	1000	
Co	230	
Co	700	
Co	1070	
Co	1000	
Co	1140	
Co	3250	
Co	3300	
V	1320	
V	2290	
V	2260	
V	2380	
V	1050	
V	2132	
T	1000	

G – Ca	875
Co – V	1110
Co – C	1210
Co – Cu	600
Co – Ca	1070
Co – M	595
Co – T	1750
Co – F	2250
F – Ch	2250
F – C	2260
F – T	2460
F – M	2550
G – F	1135

qualitative and quantitative standpoint. Fortify Guantanamo in order to be able to resist for a longer period of its surrender to German forces.[71]

The facility and consistency with which the General Board was able to define the foe in the Atlantic was noticeably absent in the Pacific. In the latter area, apart from the traditional requirements to defend territory and citizens, there was no policy like the Monroe Doctrine which would prompt the United States to lay down the gauntlet. While it is true that the Open Door was an important plank in the American Far East platform, it was not backed with the same willingness to resort to force that marked the Closed Door of the Monroe Doctrine. The threat therefore was somewhat more difficult to define.

The logistical and strategical considerations which confronted the General Board planners were also vastly more complicated in the Pacific; even with a Canal through the Isthmus of Panama, the distances to zones of combat were many times greater than in the West Indes. An enemy could be engaged in the Caribbean from strong points close to home bases, or even from the home bases themselves as was demonstrated in the Spanish-American War. In 1900, when the General Board began to study the naval strategy of the Pacific, there was no base to speak of in the Far East where capital ships

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71. "Germany War Plan," pp. 63-65.

could be assured of the considerable technical support which their complexities demanded. Reliance had to be placed on foreign facilities which would of course be denied in the event of United States belligerency. Then, extensive refit could only be accomplished by the long trek to West Coast ports, a time consuming and power draining process.

Further, the size of the American fleet and the spectre of a German attack in the Atlantic meant only a small Asiatic squadron, hardly sufficient as a basis for sensible war planning. So weak were the American naval forces on the Asiatic station in 1900 that one experienced naval officer stationed there declared them "most fficient" and easy prey to "any naval force ... except Turkey, Spain, Portugal, and China."[72] In short, the Caribbean was a good place to have a war and therefore an enemy; neither was true in the Pacific.

Prior to the establishment of the General Board, Japan had received some attention as a possible aggressor in the Pacific. The staff at the Naval War College had in 1897, at the request of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt, made studies of the possibility of a conflict with Japan. The motivating cause was the U.S. move to annex Hawaii.[73] Soon after the General Board began

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72. Captain Bowman H. McCalla to Lieutenant Commander William S. Sims, May 9, 1904, Sims Papers.
73. William R. Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958), pp. 11-12.

meeting, Lieutenant John M. Ellicott forwarded a paper identifying Japan as a likely antagonist of the United States both because of the friction which accompanied the annexation of Hawaii and the "natural" propensity of Japan to expand southward and acquire the Philippine Islands.[74] But the General Board was too occupied with the German threat to look westward. In fact, the Board was "so engrossed by the Atlantic and West Indian situation" that it did not have time to even concern itself with the Philippine Insurrection.[75]

The events growing out of the Boxer uprising and the siege of Peking were of sufficient gravity to induce the Board to divert some of its energies to the Far East. What it saw was hardly encouraging:

Philippine Insurrection, the Boxer Uprising, Great Power conflicts over China, Russian intrigue to capture the vast industrial wealth of Manchuria, inadequate base facilities with which to support even an undersized squadron of vessels.

As a planning body the General Board did not play a major role in the naval operations in the Far East. However, the difficulties of conducting operations in North China from Philippine ports led the Board to urge upon Secretary Long the necessity of a naval base in the area which would put the United States in a position akin to the

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74. Lieutenant John M. Ellicott, "The Strategic Features of the Philippine Islands," May 12, 1900, General Board Letterpress, Vol. 1, pp. 6-14.
75. Dewey to Long, May 23, 1900, General Board File 401.

other western naval powers in North China.[76]

The easing of the Boxer crisis after the capture of Peking did not, in the opinion of the Board, eliminate the need for the base for now plans were being developed identifying Russia as the enemy and, in order to be prepared for war, a salient was required close to the anticipated combat zone in the Yellow Sea area.[77] Unlike in the Atlantic however, the Board envisioned a struggle between two coalitions, Great Britain, Japan, and the United States in one and Russia, France, and Germany in the other.[78] Although the likelihood of such a development was remote, it was the only reasonable foundation upon which to lay plans. U.S. policy towards China was at this state based on the premise that there would be cooperation among the powers involved; U.S. naval forces were too weak to undertake bi-lateral hostilities; and there was the feeling that the Russian threat in Manchuria was an issue which tended to divide the powers along the lines indicated above. Japan's membership in the anticipated U.S.-British Alliance became further solidified by the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Pact of 1902. France was considered a natural ally of Russia because of their European friendship and the innate antipathy towards Germany made it almost axiomatic

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76. Dewey to Long, June 27, 1900 and June 29, 1900, General Board Letterpress Vol. 1, pp. 42-43, 47.
77. Rear Admiral Arent S. Crowninshield, Senior Member Present to Commander-in-chief Naval Force Asiatic Station, October 18, 1901, General Board File 425-2.
78. Rear Admiral Frederick Rodgers to General Board, May 13, 1901, General Board File 425-2.

that she should be placed in the Russian camp.[79]

Despite constant pleadings and the support of Secretary of the Navy John D. Long, the General Board was not able to convince the State Department that the need for a China base was more important than adherence to the expressed policy of support for Chinese territorial integrity. The Board was not interested in a base in Korea from which to operate against the Russians because it would be too close to the Russian strongholds at Vladivostock and Port Arthur and German activities at Kiauchiau.[80] Besides, if Japan were an ally it would not be needed; and if an enemy, untenable.[81]

The alliance on which the Board's early war planning for the Asiatic theater was based, would have required a radical shift in the direction of American foreign policy. The Board members surely recognized this but were forced to the extreme by a realization that American naval power would be hard pressed to undertake hostilities on its own. It was overextended in the support of the most basic of national responsibilities - protection of citizens. Attempts to reinforce the Asiatic fleet and to station a force of 1,000 marines in the Philippines failed because of the overriding fear of the German threat in the Atlantic.

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79. Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909, pp. 115-116.
80. Crowninshield to Commander-in-chief Naval Force Asiatic Station, October 18, 1901, General Board File 425-2.
81. General Board endorsement on letter from W. W. Rockhill to John Hay, July 3, 1902, letter dated June 18, 1903. Cited in Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909, p. 134.

The signing of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in January of 1902 was greeted by American naval strategists as a good omen. It appeared to force Russia's hand in Manchuria for she agreed to withdraw all of her troops by October of 1903. The Board's probable enemy in the Far East seemed to be in retreat.[82] The optimism was short-lived and vanished with the presentation of Russia's seven demands to China which were prerequisites to further withdrawals.[83] The Board became alarmed and this development, together with a dismal report from Rear Admiral Robley D. Evans on the escalation of tensions in the area, prompted the Board to renew its recommendation for an increase of Marine strength in the Philippines to assist E ıs in carrying out his extensive responsibilities not only for the pr tection of U.S. citizens but also to seize an advance base in North China in the event of war.[84]

War did come in Febrauay of 1904 but not as the General Board had planned. The conflict remained a two nation struggle but its outcome forced a dramatic shift in the General Board's identification of the enemy. Now the members had little choice. Japan was the only serious contender now that Russia was prostrate, France had established an entente with Great Britain, and both Germany and

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82. General Board endorsement on letter from W. W. Rockhill to John Hay, July 3, 1902, letter dated June 18, 1903. Cited in Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909, p. 142.
83. Ibid., p. 143.
84. Evans to Secnav, May 2, 1903, General Board File 408-2; Dewey to Secnav, June 15, 1903, General Board File 408-2.

England concentrated their power in home waters. And yet the Board found the Navy ill-equipped to meet Japanese power whose performance during the war proved it was not to be taken lightly. Support facilities in the Pacific were still inadequate. The ships in the Asiatic fleet were hardly sufficient to counter any Japanese moves toward the Philippines. The Atlantic was still predominant in American naval thinking.

While the choice of Pacific foes had been narrowed, the Board did not develop any specific war plans against Japan until late 1906. Even the classes at the Naval War College continued the practice of the past and devoted their attention to the study of the problem of German aggression in the Atlantic.[85] Undoubtedly the Taft-Katsura understanding helped persuade the Board members that the Japanese threat was more theoretical than real. While some reports of Japanese intrigue in the Philippines came to the Board's attention[86] they were neither as credible nor as frequent as those detailing German activities in the Caribbean. The prospects for continued calm in the Pacific in early 1906 appeared so bright that the General Board dropped its oft-declared need for a base in China and the Navy withdrew all battleships from the Asiatic station.

However the calm was soon broken and tensions began to build anew, but this time with the Japanese over the issue of seal poaching

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85. Naval War College Records, Boxes 45-54, Federal Records Center, Mechanicsburg, Pa.
86. Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909, p. 188.

in the Aleutians. President Roosevelt told Secretary of the Navy Charles J. Bonaparte to alert the General Board to be ready for advice in the event the crisis developed into hostilities.[87] The Board's response was hardly encouraging for it suggested that the Navy did not have the capability to wage war in the Pacific because there were inadequate facilities in the Philippines with which to support the fleet. It went on to state that it was also useless to keep the expeditionary force of Marines stationed there since 1903, and it recommended their withdrawal to the United States. A fortified base in the Philippines had been and was still the sine qua non of the General Board's Pacific strategy.[88] Only eight months before this frank admission of debility had been stated to Congress by Captain William Swift, a long time General Board member. He told the House Naval Affairs Committee that if

> war were to develop between the United States and some other power having docking facilities on the coast of Asia, we being in our present condition, the first step of our Government would be to anticipate needs and to supply the forces on shore with a large amount of stores. Then it would devolve upon the Navy to protect our communications with the Philippines so long as our vessels could stay there without going into a dock, excluding the consequences of an engagement with the enemy. After a while, in a few months, the vessels would be forced to return home, to go to California for docking. A reasonable estimate for going home and back again, including the repairing which would be necessary, would be from five to six months, and during that time the

87. Roosevelt to Bonaparte, August 10, 1906, Elting Morison, ed., The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, (8 vols., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951-1954), Vol. 5, p. 53.
88. Dewey to Secnav, August 13, 1906, General Board File 408-2.

coast of the Philippine Islands would be open to an enemy, and when they got back they would probably find the enemy's forces in possession of many of the important ports on the coast, if nothing worse; and this nation would suffer the consequent loss of prestige before the rest of the world.[89]

When relations with Japan worsened after the San Francisco School Board decision to exclude Japanese school children from the city's regular public schools, President Roosevelt asked if the General Board was ready in the event hostilities came.[90] While the Board reply indicated that plans were "complete,"[91] the fact was that the developing crisis caught the General Board completely unprepared and it had to "hurriedly" sketch out a course of action should war come.[92] The Board's estimate was that while things looked "ugly,"[93] war would not result "over so trivial a question," and at a time when Japan was "in the present exhausted condition."[94] Besides, the General Board did not want to go to war with Japan. Dewey did not

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89. Testimony of Captain William Swift before the House Naval Affairs Committee, U.S., Congress, House, House Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Estimates Submitted by Secretary of the Navy, 59th Cong., 1st sess., House Doc. No. 53, (Washington, 1906), p. 496.
90. William Loeb, Jr., to Bonaparte, October 27, 1906, General Board File 425-2. Loeb was Roosevelt's private secretary.
91. Dewey to Assistant Secretary of the Navy Truman H. Newberry, October 29, 1906, General Board File 425-2.
92. Memorandum by Commander Joseph L. Jayne, November 23, 1909, General Board File 425.
93. Remark by Dewey made to his wife and recorded in her diary entry of October 27, 1906, Dewey Papers.
94. Captain Nathan Sargent's diary entry for November 30, 1906, Sargent Papers, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

think the Navy was ready;[95] another member felt that the United States would get a "dowsing" if war came.[96] The Board recognized that the Navy needed time to prepare and it was believed that time was on the American side.[97]

While the Board's estimate discounted Japanese hostilities as a probability, the events of 1906 served to transfer Japan from the category of "sure friend" to "possible enemy."[98] In March of 1907 the Board took the position that "political conditions have so altered that war is not improbable with an Asiatic power whose fleet is superior to any which the United States can habitually keep in Asiatic waters... ."[99] The Naval War College, whose annual strategic st· 'es prior to 1906 were never predicated on a war with Japan, began to emphasize this contingency and, between 1906 and 1914, Germany and Japan received equal attention.[100]

Although the Board considered a Japanese attack on the Philippines "very improbable," its strategy was based on that

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95. Mrs. George Dewey's diary entry, October 27, 1906, Dewey Papers.
96. Captain Nathan Sargent's diary entry, November 30, 1906, Sargent Papers.
97. Dewey to Rear Admiral Willard H. Brownson, January 15, 1907, Dewey Papers.
98. Dewey to Secnav, March 5, 1908, cited in Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909, p. 221.
99. Dewey to Secnav, March 4, 1907, General Board File 405.
100. Annual "Solutions to the Problem," Naval War College Records, Boxes 45-54, Federal Records Center, Mechanicsburg, Pa.

assumption. The Board's plans called for the large vessels in the Asiatic fleet to retreat and await rendezvous with the westward bound Atlantic fleet. Shore defense of the Philippines would be concentrated at Subic Bay where it was hoped that the Army and coastal defense forces would be able to hold against the Japanese until the arrival of the concentrated American fleet, a period of about three months. Prospects that this could be done were not bright; there was a "strong probability that Subic and the Philippines would fall, leaving the United States thereafter with no point of support for its fleet, and giving to Japan the prestige of a decided initial success."[101]

The hope of the Board planners was that the Congress would be disposed to provide for a two-ocean fleet which would present both Germany and Japan with no rational basis for aggression. Lacking this, the next best approach would be to fortify a base in the Philippines to such an extent that the Japanese could not seize it during the period that Atlantic naval power was being transferred to the Pacific. Neither of these goals were achieved during the period under study, the German "threat" demanded continued priority over the Pacific, and the only real foundation for the Board's Pacific strategy was that the Japanese would not attack.

In the Spring of 1913, the actions of the California legislature, directed at the passage of a law which would effectively deny to Japanese aliens the right to own real property in California, and the

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101. General Board Minutes, June 15, 1907, Vol. 3, p. 108.

concomitant protestations by Japan, raised once more the question of war. More than at any other time in the past, the General Board seemed to think that conflict was a real possibility. It submitted a memorandum to the Secretary of the Navy which listed a series of steps to be taken "immediately" to prepare for war. Among these were to dock all ships in the Atlantic fleet, concentrate all Asiatic forces at Manila Bay, begin preparations to evacuate Guam on eight hours notice, and to go on a twenty-four hour shift at the Washington Naval Gun Factory.[102] Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels listened attentively to the Board's urgent proposals but declined to take any actions which would indicate to the public the alarm felt among the Board members.[103] A week later the Board urged the Secretary to redeploy the fleet as a preventive measure in case war were to break out, and as a deterrent to aggressive action on the part of Japan. The principal movement the Board had in mind was to mobilize the Atlantic Fleet at Guantanamo and prepare it for immediate dispatch to the Pacific.[104] Acting Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt approved of the General Board recommendation "in principle" but added that no action would be taken until the President so directed.[105] Meanwhile President Woodrow Wilson

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102. General Board Memorandum to Secnav, April 29, 1913, General Board File 425.
103. Ibid.
104. General Board Minutes, May 7, 1913, Vol. 5, p. 89; Dewey to Secnav, May 8, 1913, General Board File 425.
105. Memorandum to General Board from Commander N. L. Jones, May 10, 1913, General Board File 425.

took steps to ease the tension and by June Dewey was able to express relief that the "trouble with Japan" was over.[106]

The "crisis" of 1913 found the General Board much better equipped with specific war plans than in 1906. During the intervening seven years, much effort was directed at developing and perfecting strategic schemes for guidance in the event of conflict with Japan. The most advanced of these was the "Orange Plan" which was approved by the General Board on April 29, 1913.[107] In this document the Board set forth in great detail its estimate of Japanese strategy and the plans which the United States should be prepared to execute to counter that strategy.

The Board's analysis indicated that war might break out as a result of: trade rivalry in the Pacific between the United States and Japan; racial antagonism; and population pressures within Japan tending to a decision to acquire lebensraum in the Philippines. The Japanese were characterized as a militaristic people who were constantly ready for war and whose estimate of the United States' willingness and readiness to fight was not much higher than their evaluation of China. Ignorant of the capability of the American Navy, and overly impressed with the invincibility of their own navy, the Japanese could be easily led by ambitious leaders into the conclusion

106. Dewey to son George, June 19, 1913, Dewey Collection, Office of Naval History, Washington, D. C.
107. General Board Minutes, April 29, 1913, Vol. 5, p. 76.

that war could be successfully undertaken against the United States. Countering these tendencies was the realization that war would disrupt their large trade with the United States, create demands on a national treasury already drained by the war with Russia and sorely needed to advance internal well-being. However, the Board felt that if Japan were eventually going to war with the United States, it would be in their best interests to hasten its inception before the United States increased its level of force and preparedness, fortified Guam, and completed the Panama Canal.[108]

If the Japanese chose to initiate hostilities she would strike the first blow, as she did in the Russo-Japanese War, without a formal declaration.[109] Further, because of the secrecy which surrounded Japanese war preparations, her navy could be in the target area, fully ready on the day hostilities began. Japan was viewed as having the capability to carry an effective campaign to the Philippines, Guam, Kiska, Midway, and Tutuila, Samoa. Although it would strain her resources she also had the power to sealift four army corps to Hawaii. While the United States was superior in the overall number of large ships and guns, it was inferior in personnel, auxiliaries, naval reserve, and general readiness for war. The most significant

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108. War Portfolio No. 2, Reference No. 5-I, Orange War Plan, Strategic Section, General Board File Box 5, pp. 8-10.
109. Ibid., p. 10.

initial advantage for Japan was her proximity to the area of expected combat. It would permit the Japanese Navy to command the seas of the Western Pacific for an estimated 60 days with a Panama Canal and 104 days without it.[110]

The Board felt that the Japanese would strike the Philippines first, destroy the ship support facilities at Subic Bay and Manila, and then operate so as to deny the Islands to the transiting U. S. fleet by holding the principal strategic points.[111] As second priority, they would occupy and fortify Guam so that the United States forces would not be able to use it on their arrival in the Pacific without first expending a substantial amount of effort to oust the Japanese.[112]

Guam was considered by the Board one of the most strategic positions in the Pacific. Properly fortified (this had not been done by 1914), and held by the United States, it could serve as an operating base to harass Japanese lines of communications to the Philippines and even threaten the enemy's homeland. As a counter-move, Japan would have to divert a large proportion of strength from any attack on the Philippines. Conversely, if Japan captured and fortified Guam, "it would heavily handicap Blue [the United States] in any attempt to establish and maintain a line of supply and communications across the Pacific."[113]

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110. War Portfolio No. 2, Reference No. 5-I, Orange War Plan, Strategic Section, General Board File Box 5, pp. 13-14, 17.
111. Ibid., p. 21.
112. Ibid., p. 22.
113. Ibid., pp. 22-24.

It was also anticipated that Japan would attempt to seize Midway Island and Kiska in order to advance her sea frontier across the Pacific in the direction of the likely American counter-thrust.[114] Keeping in mind that the primary objective of the Japanese was the Philippines, the Board did not think that Japan would undertake operations against Hawaii, the Panama Canal, Alaska mainland, or the United States Pacific coast until the American fleet had been met and decisively defeated.[115]

The objective of the General Board counter-strategy was to arrive in the Western Pacific with a concentrated battle fleet clearly superior to the Japanese Navy.[116] Until this could be done, U. S. forces present in the Far East on the outbreak of war would have to do their best to defend the Philippines against the Japanese attack. Prospects for holding on were very dim, and it was thought that only Correigidor would be able to survive until the fleet arrived from the Atlantic.[117] Guam, Midway, and Kiska would be defended only with the light forces available to them. In the Board's estimate, "these points must be primarily sacrificed by Blue, to be retaken later when the forces are adequate."[118] Navy forces in the Eastern Pacific would

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114. War Portfolio No. 2, Reference No. 5-I, Orange War Plan, Strategic Section, General Board File Box 5, p. 28, 31.
115. Ibid., pp. 48-49.
116. Ibid., p. 58.
117. Ibid., p. 70.
118. Ibid., p. 62.

concentrate at Hawaii to defend against the unlikelihood of a Japanese attack there, and to await the arrival of the Atlantic Fleet.[119]

The largest segment of U.S. naval power would sail from the Atlantic when ready via the Panama Canal if completed, or via the Magellan Straits if it were not. In either case this force would proceed to San Francisco for repairs and provisioning, then steam via Pearl Harbor and Midway to Guam. After capturing Midway and Guam from the Japanese, the fleet would sail for the Philippines where it was expected the major and decisive engagement would take place. The Board's diagrammatic presentation of the strategic positions involved in its estimate is included on the following page.

The Board had the option of sending the fleet via the Cape of Good Hope or the Suez Canal but rejected it because neutral ports along either track would probably be denied to the ships. On the other hand, the Magellan route offered the vast and friendly stretches of coastline along eastern and western South America where it was thought the Navy could find adequate coaling sites even without violating the territorial waters of the Latin American countries.[120]

In summary, the Board's war plan strategy against Japan was to treat Hawaii as the defensive sea frontier, concentrate forces, then gradually expand the frontier westward until the Japanese fleet was

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119. War Portfolio No. 2, Reference No. 5-I, Orange War Plan, Strategic Section, General Board File Box 5, p. 63.
120. Ibid., pp. 66-67.

- Area - Zone under control of U.S. within which fleet freedom of movement exists.
ion Area - same as above but applies to Japan.
en Area - Zone in which either side may take offensive in first period of war.
Area - Zone within which major and minor actions be fought in second period of war. The deeper the - the greater the probability.

Strategic Positions. Blue & Orange

Distances Approximate (see table) within 50 miles

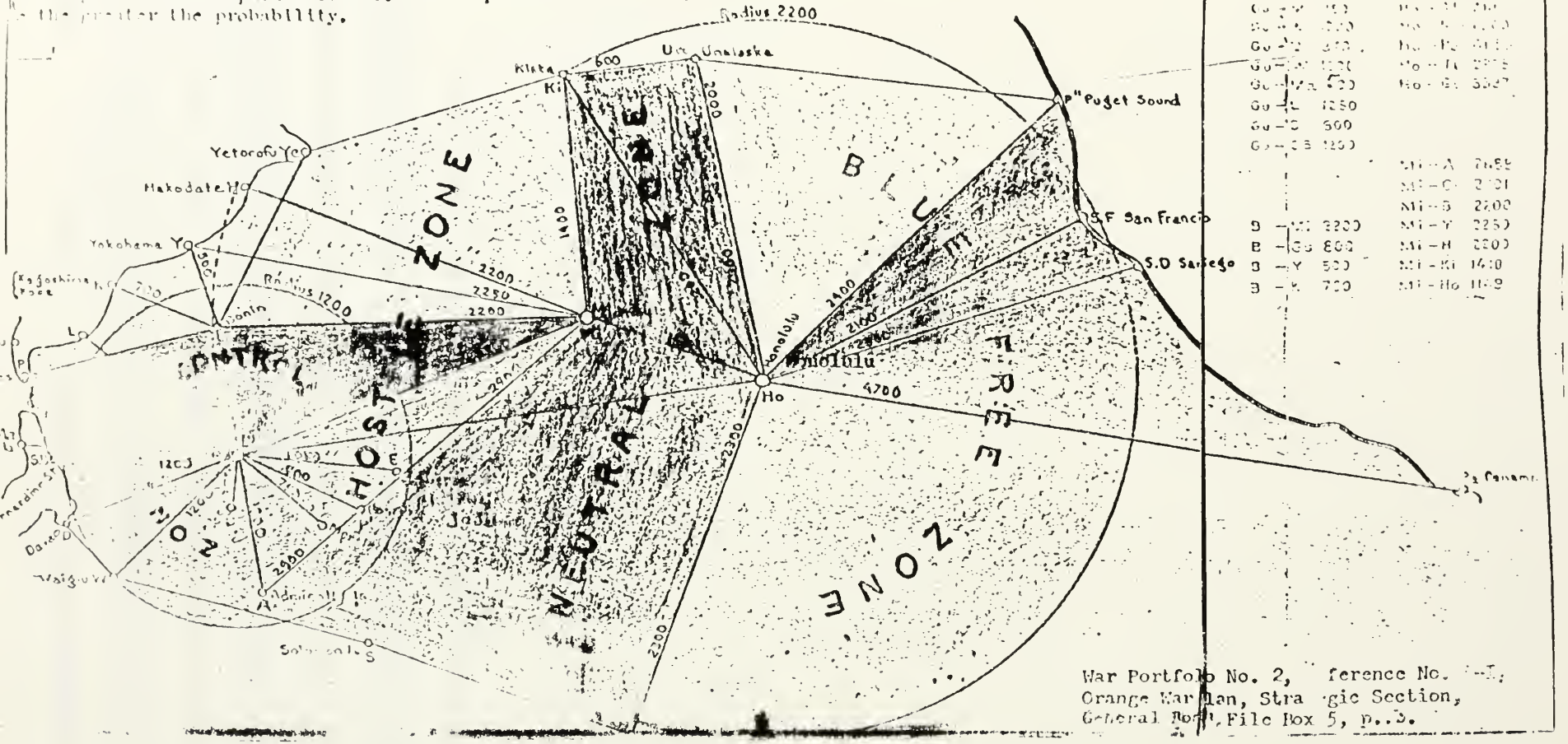

Table of Distances			
Gu – [illegible]	2731	Ho – Mi	[illegible]
Gu – [illegible]	2237	Ho – Pi	4790
Gu – [illegible]	1995	Ho – Ha	4350
Gu – [illegible]	915	Ho – Pa	4900
Gu – [illegible]	193	Ho – Sa	5000
Gu – [illegible]	1500	Ho – Sa	[illegible]
Gu – [illegible]	1850	Ho – Pa	[illegible]
Gu – [illegible]	1250	Ho – Ba	5000
Gu – Ha	500	Ho – Ba	5567
Gu – Ja	1250		
Gu – Ja	500		
Gu – Ja	1250		
		Mi – A	2685
		Mi – C	2101
		Mi – S	2200
B – Ja	2200	Mi – Y	2250
B – Ja	800	Mi – H	2800
B – Y	500	Mi – Ki	1410
B – K	700	Mi – Ho	1109

War Portfolio No. 2, [illegible]ference No. [illegible]-I, Orange War Plan, Strategic Section, General Board, File Box 5, n.d.

defeated and captured territory restored. The Board did not consider in its Orange Plan the possibility of a two ocean war - Germany in the Atlantic and Japan in the Pacific. The reason is clear: throughout the period from 1900 to 1914 the Board was never confident that the American Navy could handle one of the opponents, much less both at the same time. But if the Board was given a choice of adversaries, it is equally clear that Japan would not have been one of them.

CHAPTER VI

THE BASES

Captain Asa Walker, one of the charter members of the General Board, wrote in 1900:

> the modern man of war presents no canvas to the winds; within her bowels is an insatiable monster whose demand is ever for coal and still more coal. Every cubic inch of available space is filled with fuel, and when this is consumed the vast machine becomes an inert mass. Coal then may be considered as the lifeblood of the man of war, and upon its supply depends her existence as a living factor in the battle equation.[1]

While Captain Walker emphasized the importance of coal, his "insatiable monster" had other critical needs: ammunition; food, supplies and repair facilities of many kinds to keep the complex machinery and weaponry in operating condition; and drydocks to clean the underwater hull of speed-retarding marine growth and to correct deficiencies to normally inaccessible portions of the ship's structure. The locations at which these requirements could be satisfied were called bases and, needless to say, they have existed as long as nations have had modern navies. They were a good deal more than

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1. Captain Asa Walker, "The Battle of Manila Bay," unpublished mss., Naval War College 1900, Naval War College Records, Federal Record Center, Mechanicsburg, Pa., Box 24.

just "coaling stations" for they had to provide much more than just fuel. Further, they had to be strongly protected from an enemy attack; otherwise the resources which they offered would invite their capture. Their number, character, and location were matters of great strategic importance and largely determined the nature, scope and effectiveness of the General Board's war plans prepared during the period from 1900 to 1914.

Prior to the territorial expansion of the 1890's, all of the American naval bases were located within the continental United States. Ships cruising on distant stations relied mostly on foreign facilities for their support - facilities which could be denied in the event the United States became engaged in a war. But the bases then in existence seemed to many to satisfy the Navy's assumed mission of commerce protection and coast defense. Any enemy would have to challenge the U. S. Navy in its home waters where adequate shore-based support was available.

This concept of local defense was questioned by the theories of Captain Alfred T. Mahan. For him the real key to the defense of the coast line was to confront the enemy on the high seas and destroy him before his arrival in the home target area. Besides a navy existed for much more than just coast defense. For him the great avenue of progress was the sea for on it was carried the world's major commerce which, in turn, was the basis of a nation's wealth; however,

sea commerce depended on a strong merchant marine, access to markets abroad, and acquisition of colonies. These three elements had to be protected by sea power and a system of far-flung bases.

Mahan's "colonies" were acquired as a result of the Spanish-American War, and their protection by appropriate bases was no longer a question of theory but of fact. Now the United States found its "coastline" extended many hundreds of miles in the Atlantic and many thousands in the Pacific. The problem of where to locate seapower support facilities at home and abroad to best advance U.S. interests was a large and difficult one and it received a commensurate share of attention from the Board members.

Secretary of the Navy John D. Long's initial letter of instructions to the General Board had directed the members to study the Navy's need for naval bases "at home," in the newly acquired "dependencies," or "wherever hostilities might occur.[2] As was shown in Chapter II, this authorization eventually became the source for the first major conflict between the bureaus and the Board since it brought the former into competition with the Bureau of Equipment, the office which had previously exercised almost exclusive jurisdiction over the subject of base location. The Board's founders wanted to avoid conflict if possible because it might give cause to Secretary Long to cut short its existence in the interests of internal harmony.[3] It was for this

2. John D. Long to Admiral George Dewey, March 30, 1900, General Board File 401.
3. Chapter II, p. 45ff.

reason that the Board's early naval base policy was marked by a high degree of caution. While its members discussed the question of bases repeatedly, there was a reluctance to offer any specific recommendations to Long. On April 17, 1900, the Board ranked Guantanamo Bay, Cuba as the most important site for a naval base regardless of location, however it was decided that the Secretary of the Navy should not be so advised until he asked for an opinion.[4] By June of 1900 it had come to a conclusion relative to a naval base in China but did not tell Long what it was; instead he was advised that the information was available if he desired it.[5]

At the same time the Board made it clear to Long that the selection of naval bases was intimately connected with strategic considerations, and he was requested to refer such questions to the Board prior to final decision.[6] The Board's concern was that the recommendations of the Chief of the Bureau of Equipment, Rear Admiral Royal B. Bradford, were not in keeping with the Navy's strategic necessities and, if accepted, would be out of harmony with the war plans being developed by the General Board.

Bradford's view of base requirements was significantly more expansive and more attuned to the sensitivities of Congress than were those of the General Board. For example, he wanted to protect Cuba

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4. General Board Minutes, April 17, 1900, Vol. 1, p. 5.
5. General Board Minutes, June 29, 1900, Vol. 1, p. 20; Dewey to Long, June 29, 1900, General Board Letterpress, Vol. 1, p. 47.
6. Dewey to Long, June 27, 1900, General Board Letterpress, Vol. 1, p. 44.

and the entrance to the Gulf of Mexico with no less than three bases: y West, Dry Tortugas, and Havana. His reasoning was based not on strategy alone, but on the expectation that Florida Congressmen would be more willing to lend their support to other projects if something were offered for their home districts.[7] On the other hand the Board, resting its case on strategic needs, thought Key West would suffice.[8] Bradford thought it essential that first class naval bases be established at such places as: Sitka, Liberia, the East and West coast of South America, and the Galapagos Islands.[9] The Board's position was that the United States already had too many bases and should not be encumbered with many more. It saw bases in terms of their wartime function and were hesitant to go beyond what were considered to be realistic combat needs. Since the bases would be useless if not defended, the members felt that an excess would overextend the Navy's resources; a preferable solution would be to rely on commercial facilities in time of peace and a few bases and sea-going colliers in time of war.[10]

Bradford's resistance to the Board's naval base policies continued until Secretary Long was succeeded by William H. Moody in

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7. Captain Charles S. Sperry to wife, September 7, 1902, Sperry Papers, Library of Congress.
8. Dewey to Secnav, September 30, 1902, General Board File 414-1.
9. General Board Minutes, June 19 to September 26, 1902, Vol. 1, pp. 187-209.
10. General Board Minutes, September 27, 1902, Vol. 1, p. 196; Dewey to Secnav, September 30, 1902, General Board File 414-1.

May of 1902. Moody, much more sympathetic to the Board's arguments than Long, settled the dispute by inviting the General Board to comment fully and freely on the question of naval bases.[11] This action and Bradford's departure for sea duty a short time later removed one of the principal obstacles which the Board encountered in its expression of a naval base policy.

A greater source of difficulty remained and it came from Congress. The Representatives quite naturally looked with favor on the presence or prospect of a naval base within their district because, among other things, it contributed to the economy. Conversely, they tended to view with relative disinterest any expenditures in the overseas territories like Subic Bay in the Philippines or Guantanamo in Cuba. They were concerned that the construction and use of expensive overseas drydocks - the sine qua non of a full-fledged naval base - would drain away money which would otherwise be spent at home. This feeling continued despite assurances from members of the General Board that these docks would be used for only emergency repairs and would not result in a diversion of funds normally flowing into the home yards.[12]

The naval bases in existence in 1900 had been developed over a period of more than a century in a naval environment of small ships,

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11. Moody to Dewey, July 10, 1902, General Board File 414-1.
12. Testimony of Captain William Swift, U.S., Congress, House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Appropriation Bill Subjects, 59th Cong., 1st sess., House Doc. No. 53, (Washington, 1906), p. 468.

sails, and a philosophy of coastal defense. The Board analyzed their growth as "largely governed by consideration of the moment and only to a degree by those flowing from a reasoned policy of preparedness and economy of national finances."[13] Their continued existence seemed to be "as expediency, vested official interests and local interests dictated, rather than on any comprehensive, well digested plan following a policy looking to the best good of the whole nation."[14]

The base at Kittery, Maine, (called "Portsmouth Navy Yard" because of its location on Portsmouth Bay), was often cited with good reason as an illustration of a strategical aberration produced by purely political motives. Through the influence of Senator Eugene Hale, Chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee and a Maine resident, and the acquiescence of many of the bureau chiefs, a tremendous amount of money was poured into the Portsmouth activity notwithstanding the General Board's consistent assertions that it was not essential for the Atlantic strategy. Despite the fact that there was an adequate facility only 70 miles away at Boston, a drydock was constructed at Kittery at a cost of over one million dollars; later a channel had to be blasted at an expense of three-quarters of a million dollars which, though permitting access to some ships, could still not safely accommodate the large battleships then under construction.[15]

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13. Memorandum by Captain Harry S. Knapp, General Board Member, September, 1913, General Board File 446.
14. Memorandum by Captain John Hood, General Board Member, September, 1913, General Board File 446.
15. The Washington Post, February 5, 1915. This issue contained an article written by George von L. Meyer, Secretary of the Navy from 1909 to 1913.

The following dialogue between an economy-minded member of the House Naval Affairs Committee and the Chief of the Navy's Bureau of Yards and Docks shows quite vividly the basis for the General Board's frustration:

> Mr. Lilley: What is the object of your spending any more money on the Navy Yard at Portsmouth?
> Admiral Hollyday: As long as we have a navy-yard there we have to spend money on it.
> Mr. Lilley: but how many battleships have ever been docked there in the last ten years?
> Admiral Hollyday: No battleship has ever been docked there.
> Mr. Lilley: What is the object of a navy-yard there if you cannot get to it with your ships?
> Admiral Hollyday: The navy-yard is there. I don't know that I can answer your question.[16]

Another powerful member of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, Benjamin R. Tillman of South Carolina used his influence to attract large sums of government money to Port Royal, a place classified by the General Board as strategically valueless. Still, a drydock was built there at a cost of three-quarters of a million dollars and barely used. Finally, after a total of over two million dollars was expended the site was abandoned.[17] Tillman's comments with respect to these appropriations were: "I am trying to get a little for Port Royal because, if you are going to steal, I want my share."[18] After Port

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16. U.S., Congress, House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Appropriation Bill Subjects, 60th Cong., 1st sess., House Doc. No. 4, January 16, 1908, (Washington, 1908), pp. 214-215.
17. The Washington Post, February 5, 1915.
18. North American Review, Philadelphia, April 20, 1909, copy in General Board File 446.

Royal, another base was established to ensure a continuing source of jobs to Tillman's constituency. A facility was built at Charleston and, despite the Board's evaluation that this location was not essential to Atlantic strategy, an expensive battleship drydock was constructed which was, for all practical purposes, inaccessible to battleships because of the difficult tidal conditions in the Charleston harbor.[19]

The General Board had long urged that the bases at Pensacola and New Orleans be closed and the money diverted to more critical areas. It advised the Secretary of the Navy that those two areas were "not strategically important" and the maintenance of bases there was "a military extravagence."[20] In the last few weeks of his incumbency, President Theodore Roosevelt authorized Secretary of the Navy Truman H. Newberry to cut back on expenditures at Pensacola and New Orleans. The resulting uproar prompted Newberry's successor, George von L. Meyer to write that he was:

> in full sympathy with the policy of only keeping up the Navy Yards which are important and necessary, and of reducing the expenditures to a minimum at the other yards; but this order has raised a good deal of feeling in Louisiana and Florida, and the commercial bodies, as well as citizens, are on the backs of the Senators. ... It is very important to have their good-will during the next four years in the support of the Navy.[21]

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19. The Washington Post, February 5, 1915.
20. Dewey to Secnav, September 28, 1910, General Board File 404. For other statements to the same end see Dewey to Secnav, October 2, 1906, February 24, 1909, both General Board File 404.
21. Meyer to Theodore Roosevelt, March 8, 1909, cited in M. A. DeWolfe Howe, George von Lengerke Meyer, (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1920), pp. 462-464.

In the Board's opinion, the funds wasted in useless facilities could ve been better spent on critically important projects to improve conditions in the harbors which gave primary support to the battle fleet. New York was one of these, but its channels, while allowing battleships accessibility under normal tidal conditions, denied their ingress (or departure) during periods of unusually low tides. Thus the Texas was kept at her buoy for three full days awaiting favorable water conditions. This situation was a source of serious concern for the General Board, for in the event of war a sizable portion of the Navy's assets could be kept from meeting the enemy or receiving pre-battle repairs. While attempts were made to get Congressional appropriations to correct the situation, Congress was slow to respond and it took well over four years to rectify the problem.[22]

The mis-allocation of resources affected the U. S. West coast as well. Since 1902 the Board had been consistent in its advocacy of two first class bases: one at San Francisco and the other in Puget Sound.[23] The increased attention focused on Japan after the Russo-Japanese War made the Board even more sensitive to the strategic importance of these two sites. Yet the Board found after nine years of recommendations that neither base could adequately support the fleet for any prolonged period.[24] Docking capabilities were

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22. Dewey to Secnav, December 13, 1915, General Board File 439.
23. Dewey to Secnav, September 30, 1902, Serial No. 284, General Board File 414.
24. Dewey to Secnav, September 28, 1911, General Board File 404.

insufficient in both places, and the San Francisco base at Mare Island did not have enough water to accept the larger ships.[25]

The Board was able to draw some moral support for its outlook of concentration of effort from members of the House Naval Affairs Committee who declared in 1905:

> too often in the past naval stations have been located at the behest of local and political influence. The time has come when naval stations should be located for the best interests of the American Navy by men whose business it is to know what the naval service demands.[26]

The advice however went unheeded in practice and the Board continued to see many of its recommendations fall prey to the conflict between strategy and politics, particularly those relating to overseas locations where political leverage was at a minimum. The Board understood the problem and declared that "it may not always be possible to carry out the advisable military policy in regard to ... shore naval establishments; but ... such policy should be prepared and available for those concerned, as the ideal to be sought."[27]

There were many opportunities for the General Board to depart from its position that the number of bases be kept to a minimum. In 1904 a suggestion was made that the United States acquire the Caribbean Islands of Curacao, Corn Island, St. Andrews, Old

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25. Dewey to Secnav, January 29, 1908 and September 28, 1910, General Board File 404.
26. House Naval Affairs Committee Report No. 905, February 11, 1904, published in Hearings on Appropriation Bill Subjects, 58th Cong., 2nd sess., (Washington, 1905), p. 13.
27. Dewey to Secnav, October 2, 1906, General Board File 414.

Providence, Courtown, Alburqueque Key and Pearl Key to enhance the defense of the Panama Canal. President Roosevelt asked for the Board's opinion and it replied that the islands were of no use to the United States either as bases or defense points for the canal.[28] In the following year a proposal was made to develop sites for two bases in Puerto Rico at Jobos Harbor and Rincon Bay. Again the Board rejected the idea stating that it was undesirable to acquire any more bases in the West Indes. Instead all "efforts and expenditures in the region of the Caribbean should be concentrated toward the development of the Naval Station, Guantanamo."[29]

Expansionists within and without the Navy had long cherished the Galapagos Islands as an element in the world-wide network of naval bases. In 1899 both the U.S. minister to Ecuador and Rear Admiral Bradford had strongly urged their acquisition. The Board announced in 1903 that, while it could not look with favor on their transfer to "any European power," it did not consider them desirable as the site for a base.[30] In 1908 a pair of excited dispatches were sent to the State Department from the U.S. Ambassador in Ecuador reporting on a German move to acquire the islands by commercial penetration.[31] One member of the General Board expressed the fear that the German

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29. Dewey to Chief, Bureau of Navigation, May 27, 1905, General Board File 404-3.
30. Memorandum concerning Galapagos, undated but circa 1908, General Board File 429.
31. Secretary of State to Secnav, May 26, 1908, enclosing two dispatches from the American Legation at Quito, copy in General Board File 429.

actions bode ill for the security of the Isthmus and recommended that the United States negotiate with Ecuador for the purchase of the Galapagos to pre-empt German possession.[32] However, the majority led by Rear Admiral John E. Pillsbury adopted the view that:

> the use of the Galapagos Islands as a German naval base would hardly be attempted while [the United States] holds the Isthmus and if they [the Germans] should gain control ... they would not need the Galapagos Islands for a base any more than the United States needs them now.

Pillsbury concluded that the "exploitation" by the German syndicate did not "warrant any feeling of unrest," and "little harm" would ensue if the United States did not possess the islands.[33]

On the other hand there were some sites in the Caribbean which were not wanted as U.S. bases, but had sufficient merit to warrant possession by a potential enemy. The Board did not want these places to fall into German hands by political means. Thus it persuaded the Secretary of the Navy to take "such diplomatic steps as may be needed to insure ... not being surprised when war threatens by the sudden cession or leasing" of all or part of the island of Haiti/Santo Domingo "to any European power."[34] The Board considered this island to be particularly susceptible to political pressure because of the "feeble and chaotic conditions" which existed there. The Board told the

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32. Memorandum by Commander Joseph L. Jayne, June 23, 1908, General Board File 429.
33. Memorandum regarding the Galapagos Islands by Rear Admiral John E. Pillsbury, June 23, 1908, General Board File 429.
34. Dewey to Secnav, December 18, 1900, General Board File 413.

Secretary of the Navy that:

> so important is the possession of this Island or its military control, that if a foreign country should by a sudden surprise obtain a foothold, at or just before the outbreak of war ..., it might easily cause what would otherwise be a short campaign to grow into a long and extensive war.[35]

When, in June 1914, the question as to the sovereignity of Swan Island in the Caribbean was raised, the Board strongly urged that the United States claim it, not because the Navy wanted it, but to forestall any claim by a European government.[36] Similarly, the purchase of the Danish West Indes was favored not as a base for the American fleet but to keep it out of German hands.[37]

In view of the restraint exercised by the Board in their naval base policy, it is surprising that in 1913 one of its members seriously proposed the acquisition by the United States of all of Lower California. Captain Harry S. Knapp wanted to take advantage of the revolutionary disturbances then convulsing Mexico and "by purchase or otherwise" take the entire area. He reasoned that this would "remove for all time the possibility of any such enterprises on our immediate flank as the one that brought forth the Lodge Resolution during the last session of Congress... ." He also desired to utilize Magdalena Bay, which was included within the area, as a

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35. Dewey to Secnav, December 10, 1903, General Board Letterpress, Vol. 1, p. 109.
36. Rear Admiral W. H. H. Southerland, Senior Board Member Present, to Secnav, June 12, 1914, General Board File 433.
37. Dewey to Secnav, December 10, 1915, General Board File 427.

great naval base.[38] Knapp's letter was considered by the Board's Executive Committee briefly but never acted upon.

The General Board's recommendations on the subject of naval bases were designed to effectively protect, project, and maintain American seapower in the Western North Atlantic, the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, and the Northern Pacific.[39] Several basic criteria were used in the selection process. Obviously the area had to be available. Its location had to ensure a "sufficiently wide entrance to permit exit in strong force, a deep and protected anchorage of large extent, a capacity for ready and complete defense, and above all, a geographic location suited to strategic demands."[40] The choice of each base was also dependent on the location of others for the primary function of a base was to increase the radius of action of the fleet. A properly designed network of bases would act to extend the range of seapower over great distances. This did not necessarily mean that there had to be a continuous chain. Prior to the digging of the Panama Canal, the preferred route to the Pacific in the event of war lay through the vast expanse of water surrounding the shores of South America. Yet the Board had never seriously considered the acquisition of bases along this track for it felt that American relations with

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38. Draft letter from President, General Board to Secnav, February 24, 1913, prepared by Captain Harry S. Knapp, General Board File 439.
39. Memorandum by Captain John Hood, September, 1913, General Board File 446.
40. Captain Asa Walker, "Notes on Cuban Ports," unpublished mss. (Naval War College, 1900), Naval War College Records, Federal Records Center, Mechanicsburg, Pa., Box 24.

South America, and the distances from the anticipated battle areas afforded sufficient security.

The General Board's suggestion as to specific locations of bases understandably varied during the period under examination but they all finally pointed to these needs: two to three bases along the U.S. Atlantic coast; one base in the Central Caribbean; one base in close proximity to the Isthmian Canal; two bases athwart the U.S. Pacific coast; and two to three bases in the Central and Western Pacific.

The Board members felt that the Atlantic seaboard and the Gulf of Mexico could best be controlled with first class bases at New York and Norfolk.[41] Boston and Narragansett Bay had been included in the early Board estimates but they were eliminated with the trend toward concentration of resources.[42] Key West had also been classified as a "key strategic area" in 1902[43] but gradually de-emphasized because the Board believed that the base at Guantanamo and the opening of the Canal with a base in its vicinity would obviate the need for any bases in the Continental United States south of Cape Hatteras "from which to operate a fleet in case of hostilities in the Atlantic Ocean."[44]

To maintain control in the Eastern Pacific, the Board consistently took the view that full development of the bases at Puget

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41. Hood Memorandum of September 1913, General Board File 446.
42. Dewey to Secnav, September 30, 1902, General Board File 414-1.
43. Ibid.
44. Dewey to Secnav, September 28, 1910, General Board File 404.

Sound and San Francisco would be required.[45]

The first recommendation made by the Board for bases in the vicinity of the Isthmian Canal were offered prior to the final selection of the route. On the Caribbean side, the Board proposed a site within the Almirante Bay-Chiriqui Lagoon area of Colombia (now the Republic of Panama), which would apply regardless of the route. On the Pacific side, two locations were suggested: the Pearl Islands if the Panama route were selected; otherwise Port Elena in Costa Rica, close to the terminus of the Nicaraguan route.[46]

The problem of protecting the Canal and its approaches loomed large in the minds of the Board members. They feared that with the construction of the "Big Ditch" would come a scramble by user nations for suitable territory in Colombia. In their opinion, there was a strong analogy between the Isthmian Canal and the Suez, and they expressed it to the Secretary of the Navy in this way:

> nations whose interests are largely benefited by transit through the Suez Canal, have, since the opening of that canal, acquired not only new territory to command the canal in greater or less degree, but they have also enormously strengthened their original strongholds in the Mediterranean. Germany has attempted to secure from the Porte the island of Farsan, in the Red Sea, and has undoubted aspirations in Syria, where she has gradually acquired great influence, especially at

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45. Dewey to Secnav, September 30, 1902, General Board File 414-1; Dewey to Secnav, April 25, 1907, General Board File 420-1; Memorandum by Captain John Hood, September 1913, General Board File 446.
46. Dewey to Secnav, September 30, 1902, General Board File 414-1; Dewey to Secnav, October 7, 1902, Serial No. 284, General Board File 414.

> Haifa; at the opportune moment she will act aggressively, and it may be expected that Syria will ultimately be portioned among various interested nations.[47]

This analysis also suggested to the Board that it might be prudent for the United States and Colombia to agree that the latter's "coast territories and water be forever sequestered, as against all nations except the United States. . . ." The Board saw a parallel for this action in the arrangements made between China and other foreign nations establishing spheres of influence on Chinese territory.[48] The Secretary of the Navy endorsed these views and asked the Secretary of State to make "an effort" to follow through on the Board's recommendations.[49]

With the decision favoring the Panama route and the acquisition of defensible territory on either side of the waterway, the Board decided that no bases in the area outside of U. S. sovereignty would be needed.[50] Dewey and his officers thought it would be sufficient to have a minor base at the Atlantic end and a first class naval base at the Pacific terminus.[51]

While the Board regarded all bases as essential to the support of its strategy, the most critical were those on or close to the expected battle frontier. As was shown in Chapter V, war plans were

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47. Dewey to Secnav, October 7, 1902, Serial No. 284, General Board File 414-1.
48. Ibid.
49. Moody to Secstate, November 21, 1902, General Board File 414.
50. Dewey to Secnav, April 12, 1906, General Board File 414-1.
51. Dewey to Secnav, September 28, 1910, General Board File 414.

laid against three enemies: Germany, Russia and Japan. The conflict with Germany was anticipated in the Caribbean, and this factor, together with the many other American interest there, demanded a strongly fortified naval base to ensure a viable United States naval presence.

Before the Treaty of Peace with Spain, naval officers had pondered the question as to bases in the Caribbean and decided that, among other positions, a site would be needed in Cuba either at Santiago or Guantanamo to protect the strategically important Windward Passage which lays astride the principal shipping lane between the North Atlantic and the Isthmus.[52] Both areas were surveyed by navy ships, and senior officers in the North Atlantic Fleet were asked for their opinion. The overwhelming majority favored Guantanamo, on the southeastern coast of Cuba, because it was closer to the Windward Passage than Santiago, and had deeper water, a better climate, was more readily defended, and permitted easier egress in the event of a blockade. These officers felt that the fate of the Spanish fleet, which had to sortie from Santiago through a tortuous channel and a very narrow entrance, would never be repeated at Guantanamo.[53]

In the very first month the Board met, it decided that Guantanamo

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52. Naval War Board Report, circa August, 1898, copy in General Board File 414-1.
53. Dewey to Secnav, December 1, 1905, General Board File 406.

s the most important site for a naval base regardless of location,[54] but did not so advise Secretary Long until the following December when he was asked to seek State Department approval of a scheme to establish a base there "to defend Cuba, the Monroe Doctrine, and the Isthmian Canal." The Board also wanted "exclusive control" over an area of about 280 square miles of Cuban territory surrounding the harbor.[55] Long concurred and so informed the State Department[56] and the President.[57]

The Board members realized that their desire for a base at Guantanamo could not be immediately fulfilled because it depended on negotiations with Cuba and congressional appropriations. Pressed on by a fear of unreadiness to respond to a German attack in the Caribbean, the Board urged Long to establish an interim stronghold at Culebra, which lay within U.S. jurisdiction and was located between Puerto Rico and St. Thomas. Culebra was not meant to be a naval base in the full sense but rather an "advance base," relying chiefly on mobile as opposed to permanently fixed defenses; furthermore, it would possess no significant repair facilities. In addition to its function as a temporary base pending the development of Guantanamo, it would also serve as a forward position for the fleet, close to the edge of the Caribbean Sea through which the German

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54. General Board Minutes, April 17, 1900, Vol. 1, p. 5.
55. Dewey to Long, December 17, 1900, General Board File 406.
56. Secnav to Secstate, December 21, 1900, General Board File 406.
57. Long to McKinley, February 7, 1901, General Board File 406.

ships would have to pass enroute to their target.[58] On the recommendation of the Board, Secretary Long advised President Roosevelt of Culebra's importance, and the latter issued an executive order in December of 1901 assigning the island to Navy Department control.[59]

In November of 1901, Dewey again expressed the Board's predilection for Guantanamo in these words:

> a campaign based upon the Windward Passage, at a stronghold such as Guantanamo, would be the most reasonable and logical method of combatting a powerful enemy coming from continental Europe and having as his objective [the] isthmian canal or the occupation of South America.[60]

As the time for settlement of base rights in Cuba drew closer, the Board continued to express a preference for Guantanamo but with the proviso that the area of control be large enought to encompass the high hills surrounding the harbor, for it these strong points were beyond the U.S. perimeter, they would invite enemy seizure and challenge the security of the base.[61] The tentative lease agreement drawn up before the negotiations called for a total of approximately 280 square miles, about five times the amount finally agreed to. The Cuban negotiator, President-elect Tomás Estrada Palma resisted on the basis that the Cuban people would never consent to the

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58. Dewey to Secnav, August 21, 1901, General Board File 411.
59. Executive Order issued December 17, 1901, copy in General Board File 411; Rear Admiral Arent S. Crowninshield to Secnav, September 26, 1901, General Board File 411.
60. Dewey to Secnav, November 12, 1901, General Board File 427.
61. Rear Admiral Robley D. Evans, Senior Member Present of the General Board to Secnav, March 24, 1902, General Board File 406.

cession of so great an amount of territory. The boundaries proposed by the General Board would have placed a Cuban fort and a small town within the area of American jurisdiction. It would also have assured the Navy a good source of fresh water. The Palma objections were acceded to by the Secretary of State John Hay and the final base limits excluded the high points surrounding the station and the fresh water resources.[62] Nevertheless Guantanamo, even with these restrictions, continued as the Board's overwhelming choice as the principal naval base in the Caribbean.

The successful attack by the Japanese on Port Arthur in January of 1905, brought about partially by the capture of high ground overlooking the Russian base, created a stir within naval circles about the defensibility of Guantanamo. It also had dominant hills surrounding the harbor, they were in Cuban territory, and could, in the view of some, be easily captured, thus turning Guantanamo into an American Port Arthur.[63] There were some moves outside the Board to use the Port Arthur experience as an argument to abandon Guantanamo as the locale of the principal Caribbean base and instead locate the main bastion at Chiriqui Lagoon near the Atlantic terminus of the Canal.[64] The Board fought this movement; Dewey warned that "to withdraw the

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62. Rear Admiral Henry C. Taylor to Secnav, November 25, 1902, General Board File 406; Memorandum by Captain William Swift, March 1904, General Board File 406; Captain John E. Pillsbury to Dewey, September 27, 1906, General Board File 406.
63. Robley D. Evans, An Admirals Log, (New York and London: D. Appelton and Co., 1910).
64. Dewey to Secnav, February 1, 1905, General Board File 406.

main defense and resources to Chiriqui, and abandon the broad haven of Guantanamo to the invader, would be to invite and deserve disaster."[65] Although he asserted that the "time for discussion has past," he offered what was to the Board another cogent reason for remaining in Guantanamo: the defense of Cuba as undertaken in the Platt Amendment.[66] These arguments were sufficient to reassure Secretary of the Navy Paul Morton, and he fully endorsed them.[67]

Morton's action preserved Guantanamo's role in the General Board's strategy, but there still remained the problems of expanding the base perimeter and persuading Congress to appropriate large enough sums to make the area an effective instrument of seapower. T Board members still felt that somehow these deficiencies could be overcome, and so convinced were they of Guantanamo's strategic worth that in the midst of the Japanese "crisis" of 1906, when all eyes were turned eastward, they declared that Guantanamo was of "first importance" to the "fleet and to the country," for it was the "only Naval Station in [the] most likely, and only probably theater of war."[68] Despite these expressions of optimism and faith in the strategic significance of Guantanamo, neither of the two difficulties were solved to the Board's satisfaction.

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65. Dewey to Secnav, February 1, 1905, General Board File 406.
66. Ibid.
67. U.S., Congress, House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Appropriation Bill Subjects, House Doc. No. 62, 58th Cong., 3rd sess., (Washington, 1905), p. 504.
68. Dewey to Secnav, October 2, 1906, General Board File 404.

As Senior Member of the Joint Board, Admiral Dewey had asked in March of 1907 that the State Department undertake negotiations with Cuba looking to the expansion of the Guantanamo perimeter so as to embrace the high ground and an adequate fresh water supply.[69] However the diplomats were reluctant to begin talks because the American occupation of Cuba at the time would have put the United States in the "anomalous position" of negotiating with itself.[70] Later, when this condition no longer obtained, the State Department directed the American Minister at Havana to begin conversations with the Cubans.[71] However the Cuban representatives were reluctant to agree to the proposals for it would "excite recrimination and hard feeling" within the country.[72] The question was raised once again in 1910 but sweetened insofar as the Cubans were concerned with the concurrent offer to return the naval base concession granted in 1903 for Bahia Honda, about 40 miles west of Havana. The General Board had never been impressed with the importance of this bay, and very little had been done to develop it into a naval facility.[73] Although a

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69. Memorandum by Dewey, March 25, 1907, General Board File 406.
70. Elihu Root, Secstate to Secnav, April 6, 1907, cited in Secnav to Secstate, July 13, 1909, copy in General Board File 406.
71. Alvey A. Adee, Acting Secstate to Secnav, July 17, 1909, File 4631/11-12, General Board File 406.
72. Frederick Dearing, U.S. Chargé d'affaires at Havana to Secstate, No. 1093, September 16, 1909, attached to letter from Adee, Acting Secstate to Secnav, September 27, 1909, File No. 4631/13-14, General Board File 406.
73. John B. Jackson, American Minister to Cuba to Secstate, August 27, 1910, No. 309, copy in General Board File 406.

draft treaty was made with this provision included which seemed to satisfy emissaries of both governments, the Cuban Senate failed to give its approval and the agreement was never implemented.[74]

The usual reluctance with which Congress greeted proposals to finance extra-territorial bases applied to Guantanamo. Funds were provided but never with the rapidity, consistancy, or largesse which was felt necessary by the General Board. A drydock, which was considered an essential component of a first class naval base, was begun in 1904, but owing to a shortage of money, its construction was halted and never resumed prior to 1915.[75] The feeling in Congress was that Guantanamo's significance was minor until the Panama Canal was completed; so why finance projects which could well be delayed a few years.[76] The Army which was responsible for fixed fortifications at Guantanamo was not particularly eager to press Congress for money since there was not much there in the way of physical equipment to protect.[77] On the other hand, there were those in the Navy Department who saw little sense in pumping resources into Guantanamo unless the Army first installed fortifications

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74. U.S., Department of State, "Diplomatic History of the United States Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, 1901-1904," Research Project No. 441, (Washington, 1906), p. 28.
75. Dewey to Secnav, October 8, 1908, General Board File 406; Rear Admiral Marion Murphy, The History of Guantanamo Bay, (U.S. Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba: District Publications and Printing Office, Tenth Naval District, 1953), p. 10.
76. Secretary of War, Luke E. Wright to Secnav, October 31, 1908, General Board File 406.
77. Ibid.

guarantee their security.[78] In 1914, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy sent a memorandum to all appropriate offices in the Navy Department asking them to reassess the problem with a view to abandoning Guantanamo, limiting its role to providing refuge for the fleet in the winter, or getting on with its full development. Nothing came of this plea and, as late as 1916, with the General Board as impressed as ever with its importance, a Navy Department ad hoc board reported that Guantanamo was "totally inadequate to fill the functions of an operating base of the Atlantic Fleet ... and may, therefore, be considered of negligible importance...."[79]

The second of the three anticipated battle frontiers was in North China, and it remained a factor in the Board's strategic thinking until after the change in the power equation produced by the Russo-Japanese War. Prior to this conflict, the Board anticipated that the most probable theatre of operations in which U.S. naval forces might become engaged was in the area bounded by the Yellow Sea, the Japan Sea, and the Gulf of Pechili.[80] In addition to the responsibilities connected with the protection of U.S. citizens and property in that part of Asia, the Board felt that the Navy might be called on to face Russia in a war precipitated by the divergent Great Power

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78. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Assistant Secnav memorandum of June 9, 1911, General Board File 406.
79. Extract from Report of Board examining the future development of Guantanamo Bay, attached to letter Dewey to Secnav, December 2, 1916, General Board File 406.
80. Dewey to Secnav, November 25, 1903, General Board File 408-1.

interests and policies in China. The Philippines could not, in the Board's view, adequately support operations that far north; therefore a fortified base, close to the troubled area and under the complete control of the United States, seemed essential to United States interests.[81]

The decision as to a site was made in June of 1900, but not formally communicated to Secretary Long until the following October. The members wanted the base located at Sam Sa, Fukien Province with the second and third choices Nam Kwa, Fukien and Bullock Harbor, Chekiang Province.[82] The settlement with China over the Boxer rebellion seemed an opportune time to seek the concession an accordingly, the Board recommended that the State Department:

> obtain for the United States the free and exclusive use of Sam Sa Bay in Fo Kien [Fukien] province as a naval port with the additional pledge that a circular zone 20 sea miles in radius and wit.. the center at the eastern point of Crag Island shall not, in the future, be alienated, controlled, or used in any way by any other power and that the Chinese Government shall not erect within said zone any fortifications whatsoever.[83]

The U.S. Minister at Peking advised Secretary of State John Hay that, because of the Boxer negotiations, it would be inappropriate to raise the base question, and he suggested that the matter be deferred until

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81. Dewey to Secnav, June 27, 1900, General Board Letterpress Vol. 1, p. 42.
82. General Board Minutes, June 29, 1900, Vol. 1, p. 20.
83. Dewey to Secnav, October 10, 1900, General Board Letterpress Vol. 1, p. 81.

circumstances were more favorable.[84] Hay did however ask the American representative in Tokyo to sound out the Japanese on Sam Sa since it lay within their sphere of influence. Japan replied that she could not agree with the U.S. proposal.[85]

This eliminated Sam Sa but not the need, and, in November of 1901 the Board asked that steps be taken to acquire the Chusan Island Group near the mouth of the Yangtse River.[86] The State Department declined to take any action, not only because it would have been inconsistent with the Open Door Policy, but more importantly since it would have required the acquiescence of one or more of the other Great Powers, a most improbable prospect.[87] Undaunted, the Board renewed its request in September of 1902 for a base in the Chusans "in view of the probability that the theatre of operations" would be in the North.[88] It asked that "persistent efforts" be made in this direction even though the members knew that the Chusan area was situated within the British sphere of influence, and that an Anglo-Chinese Treaty barred China from granting leases to third powers without the concurrence of Great Britain. Dewey and his officers felt that the general concurrence of U.S.-British policy in the Far East might

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84. Edwin H. Conger to John Hay, November 23, 1900, cited in William R. Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958), p. 127.
85. Ibid., pp. 127-128.
86. Arent S. Crowninshield to Secnav, November 27, 1901, General Board File 408-1.
87. Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909, p. 132.
88. Dewey to Secnav, September 30, 1902, General Board File

be a factor in convincing Great Britain to yield such permission.[89] As in the past, the Board's position was adopted by the Secretary of the Navy, but never executed because of overriding diplomatic difficulties.

The final request of the Board for a base in China was made just a few short months before the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War.[90] The onset of that conflict, the reluctance of the State Department to accede to past requests, the aim of the United States to maintain an attitude of strict neutrality, all contributed to the Board's decision to drop its demands for a base in China. With the defeat of Russia, the Board no longer saw the need for a protected position in North China, and it felt that any operations incidental to the protection of U. S. citizens would be supportable from the foreign ports traditionally available to U. S. naval forces. On the remote chance that emergency conditions did arise which demanded a base, the Marines stationed in the Philippines could be used to seize and lightly fortify one.[91] Thus in April of 1906, Admiral Dewey advised Secretary of the Navy Charles J. Bonaparte that a base on the China coast was no longer required.[92]

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89. Dewey to Secnav, October 7, 1902, General Board File 414.
90. Dewey to Secnav, November 25, 1903, General Board File 408-1.
91. Dewey to Secnav, August 13, 1906, General Board File 408-2.
92. Dewey to Bonaparte, April 12, 1906, General Board File 414-1.

One of the most controversial questions which faced the General Board during the period from 1900 to 1914 had to do with the location of the principal naval base in the Far East. The site in China was not supposed to meet all of the needs of the Asiatic Fleet; it was never anticipated that it would contain drydocks or major repair facilities, but was to be much like Culebra in the Caribbean - an advanced fortified position from which men-of-war could operate with a reasonable degree of safety. A more critical requirement was for a first class naval arsenal akin to Guantanamo in the Caribbean or Gibraltar in the Mediterranean, and it was logical to assume that it should be located on the rim of the American Pacific frontier in the Philippines. The point of contention was not that there should be a fully equipped and fortified base in these islands but rather the best location for it.

Dewey was one of the first to offer an opinion: three months after his victory at Manila Bay and eighteen months before he assumed the presidency of the General Board he informed Secretary Long:

> about sixty miles from Manila, and to the northward and westward is Subic Bay, decidedly the best harbor in the Philippines, having no equal as a coaling station or naval and military base. The entrances are narrow, the shores bold, the water deep, the bay land-locked, easily defended from attack by sea or land, and the fresh water supply ample.[93]

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93. Dewey to Long, August 29, 1898, Dewey Papers. It is of interest to note that the Spanish held Subic in the same high regard for they had planned to erect a first class naval base there. Dewey to Secnav, June 15, 1903, General Board File 405.

Immediately after the Board was organized, it reviewed the relative merits of several sites including Subic and decided in favor of a location on the island of Guimaras in the central Philippines opposite the city of Ilo Ilo.[94] This decision appears to have been based primarily on a study made by Lieutenant John M. Ellicott of the Naval War College. Although he considered Subic Bay to be superior to Guimaras from many viewpoints, the latter was deemed preferable because it had one more egress than Subic.[95] Also, and perhaps influenced by Ellicott's arguments, the 1900 Summer Conference at the Naval War College concluded that Guimaras was "the most important point strategically in the Philippine Islands, both as a naval base and as best capable of defense."[96]

Despite the fact that in a later document the Board termed the choice of Guimaras as "tentative," it was convinced to such an extent that it recommended the President issue executive orders assigning the island to naval jurisdiction and authorizing an appropriation of $10,000 for a survey of the area.[97] Secretary Long concurred[98] and the President issued two orders implementing the Board's recommendations.[99]

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94. Dewey to Secnav, June 27, 1900, General Board File 404-1.
95. General Board Minutes, June 26, 1900, Vol. 1, p. 15; General Board Letterpress Vol. 1, p. 14.
96. Naval War College, "Solution to the Problem of 1900," Appendix C, Naval War College Records, Federal Records Center, Mechanicsburg, Pa., Box 45.
97. Dewey to Secnav, June 27, 1900, General Board File 404-1.
98. Secnav to President, July 12, 1900, General Board File 404-1.
99. Executive Orders signed by President McKinley, August 2, 1900. copies in General Board File 404-1.

Because there was doubt in some circles as to the wisdom of the Guimaras selection, Secretary Long appointed a board of officers in October of 1900 to re-examine the question and to make appropriate suggestions to him.[100] This board, under the chairmanship of Rear Admiral George C. Remey, reported a unanimous preference for Subic Bay;[101] Guimaras was considered but rejected because of its strong currents, poor anchorage ground, and a shortage of potable water.[102]

The report was referred to the General Board for comment and, in a much more cautious and deliberate fashion than occasioned the choice of Guimaras, the Board, after several months of study, expressed concurrence with Remey's findings and stated that a "strong naval base" should be established at Subic Bay.[103]

The Board's opinion did not agree with Admiral Bradford's conviction that Manila was a much better place for a base. He had also expressed preference for Havana over Guantanamo because he thought the most important consideration in locating a naval facility was to have it close to a commercial center and the many resources which it offered.[104] On the other hand the Board was more impressed with

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100. U.S., Congress, House, Report of a Commission on the Establishment of a Naval Station in the Philippines, 57th Cong., 1st sess., House Doc. No. 140, (Washington, 1901), p. 6.
101. Ibid., p. 6.
102. Ibid., p. 3, 6.
103. Dewey to Secnav, September 26, 1901, General Board File 405.
104. General Board Minutes, June 19, 1902 to September 26,

importance of strategic position and defensibility; it felt that Manila could be more easily defended if the naval base were removed from its environs. With the two close together, "an attack on one would be an attack on both; with the station at Subic, Manila could not be attacked until Subic was reduced."[105] The desire of the Board to separate bases from population centers may have been also predicated on a fear that the fleet might thereby be forced into a coast defense role (as had been the case with the Spanish in 1898), rather than engaging the enemy armada at sea. Another factor in the decision to keep out of Manila was revealed by Captain William Swift, a General Board member, when he told the House Naval Affairs Committee:

> if the United States should ever cede to the Philippine Government the control of those islands we would find ourselves (if we were at Cavite [Manila Bay]) in the same position that we found ourselves in Habana when Cuba objected to our retaining the naval station in that port. They were perfectly willing to give us a naval station on the south coast of Cuba at a point where there is no large town. ... If we were at Cavite and such a change were to occur our position would be untenable and we would be obliged to give it up. If we were located at Olongapo [Subic], at a place where there was no important town or political interest in the islands, our position would be one which we could maintain very much better.[106]

The Secretary of the Navy agreed with the Board's reasoning, and in November of 1901 the navalization of Subic Bay became, in theory at

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105. Dewey to Secnav, June 15, 1903, General Board File 405.
106. U.S., Congress, House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Appropriation Bill Subjects, 59th Cong., 1st sess., House Doc. No. 53, (Washington, 1906), p. 471.

East, a firm tenet of naval policy.[107] The efforts of the General Board from then until 1907 were directed largely at accelerating what to it was a painfully slow build-up in the area. In 1903 Admiral Dewey reminded the Secretary that Subic was and should be the primary American base in the East[108] and, reflecting on his experience during the Spanish-American War, said that if the Spanish Fleet had been at Subic, (as he had fully expected), instead of Manila, and had it been properly defended, his victory "would have been much more difficult."[109] That same year the Board offered the following geopolitical formula: who holds Subic holds Manila; who holds Manila holds Luzon; and who holds Luzon holds the Philippines.[110]

President Theodore Roosevelt was also a believer in Subic, and he advised Congress in December of 1903 that "the national interests require that the work of fortification and development of a naval station at Subic Bay be begun at an early date."[111]

Up until December of 1903 the consideration of Subic as a base was confined almost exclusively to naval officers, but with the formation of the Joint Army and Navy Board and the Army General Staff, Army officers began to address the problem. Their early

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107. Long to President Roosevelt, November 9, 1901, General Board File 405.
108. Dewey to Secnav, June 8, 1903, General Board File 405.
109. Dewey to Secnav, June 16, 1903, General Board File 405.
110. Dewey to Secnav, June 15, 1903, General Board File 405.
111. Message to Congress, December 7, 1903.

nclusions confirmed the importance of Subic Bay, Brigadier General G. L. Gillespie rejected Manila because it would have required the expenditure of vast sums to construct an artificial harbor. He was instrumental in drafting the Joint Board position that any more delay in the fortification of Subic and its development as a naval base would be "nothing less than a national disaster."[112]

Another inter-service group called the National Coast Defense Board or Taft Board, was studying the coast defense requirements of United States territory, and it ranked Subic with Guantanamo as the two foremost strategic areas under U. S. control, and the keys to the protection of U. S. interests in the Pacific and the Caribbean respectively.[113]

Although up through 1904 the best military opinion seemed disposed to Subic, Congress was reluctant to produce the money to give effect to the plans. A majority of the members of the House Naval Affairs Committee decried the indecision of their fellow Representatives and remarked that "it would seem almost criminal negligence on the part of Congress not to provide a naval station where our

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112. Brigadier General G. L. Gillespie to Chairman, Joint Board, December 13, 1903, enclosure to Dewey to Secnav, March 4, 1907, General Board File 405; Chairman Joint Board (Dewey) to Secwar and Secnav, December 19, 1903, General Board File 405.

113. U.S., Congress, Senate, Coast Defense of the United States and the Insular Possessions, 59th Cong., 1st sess., Senate Doc. No. 248, (Washington, 1906), p. 26.

ships could be docked and repaired."[114] Secretary of the Navy Moody hoped to ease the shortage of funds and to increase Subic's readiness by directing the transfer of naval assets from Manila to Subic.[115]

In mid-1904 the inter-service and intra-service harmony which prevailed as to the Subic site was interrupted by two dissonant opinions: one by Major General Leonard Wood, a friend of Theodore Roosevelt, and Governor of Moro Province in the Philippines; the other by Rear Admiral William Folger, Commander of the Philippine Squadron of the United States Asiatic Fleet. Wood told the President that the development of Subic would be a "colossal mistake" I would become the "subject of serious regret in the future." He viewed the function of the fleet in terms of coast defense, and he wanted it to take "refuge behind the defenses of Manila[116] so that it could help prevent the capture of the city, its large population, ... and capacity for certain supplies, food and labor... ."[117] Rear Admiral Folger, after consulting with General Wood, wrote the Secretary of the Navy the very same day that Wood wrote Roosevelt;

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114. U.S. Congress, House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Appropriation Bill Subjects, House Report No. 905, February 11, 1904, 58th Cong., 2nd sess., (Washington, 1905), p. 11.
115. Secnav to All Bureaus and Offices, Serial No. 17628-1, April 2, 1904, General Board File 401-1.
116. Wood to Roosevelt, June 1, 1904, General Board File 404-1.
117. Wood to Rear Admiral Joseph Strauss, February 21, 1922, Strauss Papers, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, Library of Congress.

he described Subic Bay as a "rat trap" and argued for a concentration of effort in the Manila area.[118]

Beginning about the same time as Wood and Folger, Major Charles Doyen of the Marine Corps, then stationed at Subic, used his friendship with Representative Alston G. Dayton, a powerful member of the House Naval Affairs Committee, to plant seeds of doubt within Congress as to the best location for the base. On April 23, 1904 he wrote Dayton that Subic seemed "beyond a doubt the most suitable place for a Naval Station. . . ." Just ten days later he reported a change of mind and advised against spending money to develop Subic. Instead he would do as Wood and Folger recommended: focus the nds at Manila.[119] In the following October he accused the General Board of giving "misinformation" on Subic and of being "base crazy." He suggested that the General Board members did not really believe in Subic but were afraid to alter their position because they were attempting to get "congressional recognition as an advisory board, and to admit of a blunder" would have prejudiced their cause. Doyen's real motives in advocating Manila over Subic may have been due to the primitive conditions existing in the latter place. He wrote Dayton

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118. Folger to Secnav, June 1, 1904, General Board File 404-1.
119. Major Charles Doyen to Alston G. Dayton, April 23 and May 3, 1904, Dayton Papers, University of West Virginia Library, Morgantown, West Va.

> if they intend to keep this force out here something should be done at once to improve their conditions; the climate, food and lack of diversion are bad enough but when they have not the ordinary comforts of life; when you see day after day 650 fine soldiers as can be found in the world cooped up in shacks, 106 to each room of the size and suitable and appropriate for 50 animals, (i.e. 100 ft x 30), walking anywhere from 1/8 to 1/4 of a mile three times a day to their meals, in a torrent of rain and mud for three months: it gives me a heavy fit of disgust. I don't care so much about the officers though we are none too well off but I do for the men, and I put myself on record as saying right now that I am at odds with this.[120]

In response to requests from the President and the Secretary of the Navy for comments on the discordant views regarding Subic Bay, the Board reiterated its earlier position and concluded that:

> the fundamental and conclusive reason in favor of Subic Bay and against Manila Bay is the fallacy of concentrating the means of the mobile naval defense at the center of attack, -- as if a boxer should try to defend himself by holding his fists against his own breast.[121]

President Roosevelt was impressed with the Board's reasoning and told Admiral Dewey he thought it "conclusive."[122]

The almost universal faith in Subic's importance continued to far exceed its material development. The Board complained in 1905 that the most basic naval resources - coal - was in critically short supply; five years earlier it had recommended that 200,000 tons be stored

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120. Doyen to Dayton, October 11, 1904, Dayton Papers.
121. Dewey to President, August 4, 1904; Dewey to Secnav, August 6, 1904; both General Board File 404-1.
122. Roosevelt to Dewey, August 5, 1904, General Board File 404-1.

there, yet only 13,000 was on hand due to a shortage of funds.[123] Docking facilities were non-existent until 1906 when the floating dock Dewey was moored in the harbor. Its usefulness was demonstrated by the fact that in less than two years it was used 57 times.[124] A dock such as the Dewey did not however make a naval base: a floating dock is far less flexible than a land dock; fixed fortifications were practically absent; and all of the many other components essential to a naval base were still sorely lacking.

The General Board hoped that a visit to the Philippines in 1905 by Secretary of War William Howard Taft and Chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee George E. Foss would serve to remove whatever doubts remained over Subic and to speed its lagging development. Admiral Dewey warned Mr. Foss that he would encounter prejudice against Subic,[125] and he alerted officers in the Far East who were of the Board's persuasion to do their best to counter it during the visit.[126] Dewey began to suspect that those who opposed his views on Subic were motivated by a concern for "society features"[127] and the "conveniences of comfortable barracks, well filled supply houses, capacious offices, and the attractions of a city."[128] Dewey's presumption was shared by others: Lieutenant

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123. General Board Minutes, March 29, 1905, Vol. 2, p. 155.
124. Memorandum from Rear Admiral Washington L. Capps to Dewey, March 23, 1908, General Board File 420-5.
125. Dewey to Foss, June 26, 1905, Dewey Papers.
126. Dewey to Sargent, June 27, 1905, Sargent Papers.
127. Dewey to Sargent, October 13, 1905, Dewey Papers.
128. Dewey to Rear Admiral Willard H. Brownson, February 1,

Commander Philip Andrews told Congress that the opponents of Subic would never say so officially but their real desire to remain in Manila was to savor "its comfortable feelings;"[129] Rear Admiral Robley D. Evans wrote that "the attractions of the Army and Navy Club at Manila and the pleasures of social life in the city are in strong contrast with the isolation of Olongapo [Subic], and they have undoubtedly had their effect."[130]

The visit of Taft and Foss did not result in the advancement of Subic Bay for they returned to the United States more inclined towards Manila.[131] The appropriation bill debated in the Spring of 1906 reflected this decision by providing that none of the money designated - insular fortifications would be spent at Subic. Admiral Dewey tried to muster enough opposition to defeat this exclusion by appealing to President Roosevelt to exercise his influence among the Senators. Ironically, Senator Eugene Hale was one who favored Subic, and Dewey thought if Roosevelt worked with Hale, a sufficient number of Senators could be brought into the Subic camp. According to a diary entry made immediately after the occurrence, Roosevelt refused to go along because he did not want to be "on the same side as Hale."[132]

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129. U.S., Congress, House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Appropriation Bill Subjects, 59th Cong., 1st sess., House Doc. No. 53, (Washington, 1906), p. 500.
130. Evans, An Admirals Log, p. 301.
131. House Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings, House Doc. No. 53, (Washington, 1906), p. 472.
132. Mrs. George Dewey's Diary, March 17, 1906, Dewey Papers.

The Japanese-American "crisis" of 1906-1907 generated a flow of correspondence between the Board and the Secretary of the Navy and impelled the former to advise for the first time since the demise of the Russian "menace" that war was "not improbable" with "an Asiatic power" which possessed a fleet superior to that which the United States could maintain in the Far East. The Board added that Japan would, because of the absence of an "impregnable American base" in the Western Pacific, have the Philippines at its mercy during the three months then estimated as the length of time needed to transfer the Atlantic fleet to the Pacific. In the meantime the enemy would have so reduced the support facilities for the fleet that the long voyage might just as well never have begun.[133] The Board's despondency was shared by President Roosevelt. He called the Philippines the American "heel of Achilles" and gave some consideration to announcing an intention to give the islands their independence "to remove a temptation from Japan's way...."[134]

Again in June of 1907 the Secretary's attention was called to the "present necessities" in the Pacific, and he was told that if war took place it would be essential to have a protected base in the Philippines for:

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133. Dewey to Secnav, March 4, 1907, General Board File 405. Secnav endorsed this view in his letter to the Secretary of War of same file and date.

134. Roosevelt to Taft, August 21, 1907, Elting E. Morison, ed., The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), Vol. 5, p. 762.

> capability of defense is an essential, not only for the purpose of allowing our fleet to seek that of the enemy in case our naval force should be the predominating one, but it is even more important in the event that the outbreak of war finds us with an inferior force which must be sheltered until the arrival of a reinforcement.[135]

The Board reminded the Secretary that the Subic Bay site had been accepted by "weight of overwhelming authority,"[136] and, as if to give emphasis to its weakness, requested that he dispatch four submarines to Olongapo to help defend the floating dock Dewey since there was "no land defense worthy of the name at Subic Bay."[137]

The Army interest in Subic Bay was based on its responsibility for the defense of the area from enemy attack. Up through October 1907, (when the "crisis" with Japan subsided), there had been official unanimity in both services that Subic was defensible from both the land and sea. Differences over the Manila and Subic sites were, up to that time, confined to arguments involving personal preference of one over the other. While the naval planners in the General Board had taken the position that Manila was not physically suitable as a base, their Army counterparts never offered such a sweeping condemnation of Subic Bay. A serious breach between the two services over the defensibility of Subic came when the Army

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135. Dewey to Secnav, June 18, 1907, General Board File 405; General Board Minutes, June 17, 1900, Vol. 3, p. 114.
136. Dewey to Secnav, March 4, 1907, General Board File 405.
137. Dewey to Secnav, September 26, 1907, General Board File 405.

General Staff concluded in the Fall of 1907 that Subic could not be defended from land attack. This reappraisal was based on "new examinations of the country back of Subic Bay and new studies of the subject based on the reduction of Port Arthur."[138]

Secretary of War William Howard Taft concurred in the Army's findings, forwarded them to the Secretary of the Navy, and indicated that the entire matter should be referred to the Joint Army and Navy Board for its opinion.[139] Although the General Board admitted that it was "impressed" with the Army studies, it still insisted that Subic was the preferred site from the naval point of view, and doubted whether the Army could provide Manila with any more security than could give Subic Bay.[140] Indeed, Dewey estimated it would take the Army five times as many men to defend Manila.[141]

General Board remonstrances notwithstanding, and in the face of final Army disavowal of Subic, the Joint Board was given only one realistic option: to recommend that the naval station be placed at some point in Manila Bay behind Army defenses. President Roosevelt approved this action[142] but not before informing the Secretary of the Navy in a blistering letter that the dispute had done "grave harm" to

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138. Memorandum by General Board Member Captain Sydney A. Staunton, January 17, 1912, General Board File 405.
139. Secwar to Secnav, January 21, 1908, General Board File 405.
140. Dewey to Secnav, May 27, 1909, General Board File 405.
141. New York American, October 25, 1907, Dewey Scrapbook, Dewey Papers.
142. Secnav to all Bureaus and Offices, Serial No. 17628.20 of February 19, 1908, General Board File 405.

the services because it showed "vacillation and one sided consideration ... by the army and navy experts." He went on to say that he had been:

> informed by almost every naval officer and by many army officers that Subic Bay was the one all-important post to fortify and defend, and that it alone could be made impregnable to attack. Of course when assertions like this are made to a layman, whether he be President or a member of Congress, the layman assumes and has a right to assume that those making them are to be supposed to recommend what is best under actual conditions.... Now, I have the very highest regard for the officers of the army and navy. I think them on the whole about the best citizens we have, and I want to back them in every way; but they justify their most trenchant critics when they act in such a manner.[143]

The decision to move to Manila presented the General Board planners with a serious difficulty. The Navy's most important asset at Subic was the floating dock Dewey. It could not be moved to Manila without extensive and expensive dredging which Congress would be slow to provide. Accordingly the Board appealed to the newly appointed Secretary of the Navy George von L. Meyer to leave the Subic resources intact. The Board's argument rested on these premises: that the development of a naval station at Manila would probably not be completed until after the Panama Canal was ready for service; with the Canal open, the Atlantic fleet could be rapidly transferred to the Pacific thus deterring any enemy attack on the

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143. Roosevelt to Secnav Truman H. Newberry, February 11, 1908, General Board File 405.

Philippines and giving Subic a form of defense which did not have to rely on Army assistance.[144] Secretary Meyer forwarded this recommendation to President Taft, but the latter was still not convinced and he told Meyer to get on with the move to Manila.[145] Reluctantly the General Board drew up a plan for a base within Manila Bay and it was forwarded to the Joint Board for review.

Prior to the Joint Board's reconsideration of the question the Army had reassessed its defensive capabilities in the Manila Bay region and decided that Corregidor Island was the only point in the Philippines it could assuredly hold. This eliminated the basis on which the General Board alternative of building the naval station at the mouth of the Pasig River was offered. Thus the Joint Board was faced with these options: locate the naval station within the Army shield at Corregidor; place it outside Army protection but at some point in the Philippines; de-emphasize or rule out the importance of a base in the Philippines. The Joint Board chose a combination of the last two courses of action. Eliminating Corregidor entirely because of its exposed conditions, poor natural advantages, and the great expense it would take to overcome them, it concluded that the naval base should remain at Subic Bay but with less extensive facilities than had originally been intended. The Joint Board's decision was

144. Dewey to Secnav, May 27, 1909, General Board File 405.
145. Taft to Meyer, June 7, 1909, General Board File 405.

edicated on these factors: the probable development within a reasonable period of a navy capable of keeping a force in the Far East "equal to or greater than the fleet of a possible enemy," thus deterring an attack on the Philippines; the opening of the Canal, and the increased speed and endurance of battleships would permit a more rapid transfer of force from the Atlantic to the Pacific, thus adding to the deterrence; the cruise of the "Great White Fleet" demonstrated that the inter-ocean transit could be made more swiftly than had been thought, and when the ships arrived in the Pacific, they did not need the amount of material repairs previously estimated; the creation of a large naval base at Pearl Harbor would render less necessary a first class fortified base in the Philippines.[146]

The Joint Board solution, while adding nothing to the capability of the islands to resist attack, did save Dewey and the General Board considerable face and the Navy the embarrassment of abandoning Subic; and it also reflected the degree of influence possessed by the Joint Board Chairman, Admiral Dewey and the other representatives of the General Board who were also members of this inter-service group. At the same time it confirmed the Navy's weakness in the Far East, withdrew the American sea frontier to

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146. Report of the Joint Board, November 8, 1909, General Board File 405.

Hawaii, and recognized that the real defense of the Philippines depended on the maintenance of friendship with Japan. Captain Bradley A. Fiske was one of the only members of the General Board who saw any hope for the defense of Subic by the force of arms but without resort to land fortifications; but his scheme involved the use of airpower which had not yet been accepted as a reliable weapon of war.[147]

In the view of the General Board there was one advantage which accompanied the decision to de-accentuate Subic and that was it accelerated the development of Pearl Harbor as the principal naval arsenal of the Pacific. As early as 1902 the Board had rated it among the most important strategic positions[148] and in 1903 had suggested its fortification as an insurance against an attack on the U.S. West coast.[149] Little was done to implement these ideas until the prospect of war with Japan appeared to many a real possibility.[150] At the height of the Japanese-American "crisis" the Board proposed that Pearl Harbor be transformed from a coaling station to an advanced base in order to establish a protected line of communication from the Eastern to Western Pacific.[151] Several months later and long before the decision to abandon the idea of making Subic the

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147. Captain Bradley A. Fiske to Dewey, April 7, 1911, General Board File 449.
148. Dewey to Secnav, September 30, 1902, General Board File 414-1.
149. Dewey to Secnav, July 25, 1903, General Board File 403.
150. Report of National Coast Defense Board, Committee No. 1, January 29, 1907, General Board File 403.
151. Dewey to Secnav, June 18, 1907, General Board File 405.

bralter of the Far East, the Board urged President Roosevelt to spur the growth of Pearl Harbor into a first class naval base in order to:

> prevent the occupation of the islands ... by an enemy that might otherwise be in a position to operate therefrom against our continental coast; and ... [provide] a base for a force of our own which, by placing itself upon the flank of any enemy seeking to attack our Pacific coast from north, west, or south, would afford far greater security to California, Oregon, and Washington than could be obtained by a like expenditure for fortifications within the limits of those states themselves.[152]

Pearl Harbor was unique among the overseas bases. Board recommendations for its development and fortification struck a responsive chord within Congress and, unlike Subic Bay to the West and Guantanamo to the East, the funds flowed freely. In the period of less than one year Congress appropriated almost two million dollars for its improvement,[153] and by 1913 the Secretary of the Navy could confidently report that the largest part of its construction would be completed by 1914.[154]

During the first twelve years of the General Board's existence, the island of Guam did not play a major role in the Board's Pacific strategy. It was always considered a necessary link in the

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152. Memorandum Regarding Pearl Harbor, January 17, 1908, prepared by the General Board for the President, General Board File 404.
153. Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909, p. 222.
154. Department of the Navy, Annual Report, (Washington, 1913), p. 46

trans-Pacific chain and, because of its coal supply and overseas communications cable which touched its shores, there was a feeling that it should be fortified.[155] But the Board was unwilling to assign it a capability much greater than that. In 1907, the Board estimated that "little is needed but a coaling plant with sufficient protection to guard against surprise attacks upon it."[156] In April of 1910 it held to the opinion that Guam was "not of prime value to [the] battle fleet in time of war."[157]

After the decision to abandon the concept of a fully protected naval base in the Philippines, a movement began at the Naval War College to expand Guam's role and extend the capability of U.S. sea-p. /er westward. The Summer Conference of 1910 reported to the Bc ard that Guam, "costly though it would be," should be developed into a "strongly fortified naval base of the first class;" that this should be done to ensure the defense of the Philippines; that even if a place were found in the Philippines and adequately equipped as a naval base Guam should be developed; and that Guam was essential even without the Philippines.[158] Alfred T. Mahan endorsed these views and recommended that the United States turn Guam into a

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155. Secnav Charles J. Bonaparte to Governor of Guam, September 29, 1905, General Board File 425-2. Letter drafted by the General Board.
156. Dewey to Secnav, October 3, 1907, General Board File 405.
157. Dewey to Secnav, April 27, 1910, General Board File 414-1.
158. Naval War College, "Report of the Conference of 1910," Naval War College Records, Federal Records Center, Mechanicsburg, Pa., Box 49.

"kind of Gibraltar." Mahan wrote:

> no situation [locality] in our possession equals Guam to protect every interest in the Pacific; nor need it be feared that Japan would attempt an invasion of the Pacific coast, or of Hawaii, nor probably of the Philippines, with a superior or equal American navy securely based upon a point only a thousand miles from its coast, and flanking all its eastward communications.[159]

In March of 1911, Rear Admiral Raymond P. Rodgers, the President of the Naval War College attempted to stimulate interest in these ideas among his colleagues on the General Board but without much success.[160] While a majority of the Board appeared just as impressed as Rodgers with Guam's significance, they were reluctant to ise the issue at the time because they felt it might divert interest from and possibly prejudice the development at Pearl Harbor.[161]

Favorable progress at Pearl Harbor[162] and a report from the Secretary of the Navy that many of the large construction and fortification projects would be completed by the winter of 1912-1913,[163] undoubtedly prompted the Board to adopt a changed attitude towards

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159. Mahan to Philip Andrews, September 24, 1910, original in General Board File 404.
160. Rodgers to Dewey, March 4, 1911, General Board File 425-2; General Board Minutes, January 24, 1912, Vol. 4, p. 275.
161. Dewey to Secnav, February 13, 1912, General Board File 404.
162. The Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks remarked: "It is believed that neither in this nor in any other country will a naval station of the magnitude of Pearl Harbor have been laid out and put in operation in so short a time after the construction was authorized." Department of the Navy, Annual Report For The Fiscal Year 1911, (Washington, 1912), p. 181.
163. Department of the Navy, Annual Report For the Fiscal Year 1912, (Washington, 1913), p. 46.

Guam. In December of 1912 it advised Secretary Meyer that:

> Guam occupies such a commanding strategic position in the Pacific, and one of such vital importance to our national interests in that ocean, that it is essential to hold it securely against any form of attack. It is axiomatic that a campaign involving the United States in the Far East rests primarily upon the control of the sea. To maintain, or under many circumstances, to attain that control, the fleet's line of communication must be beyond the probability of successful attack. The distance from Honolulu direct to the Philippines or to any destination of our fleet in the Far East is too long to traverse without an intermediate point of support, and Guam furnishes that point geographically. If, however, it be undefended, or insufficiently defended, it will be taken by our enemy, who, resting upon Guam, will certainly be able to dispute the control of the sea for a long time, and may be able to prevent us from ever getting it in those waters. The possession of Guam under naval control is a vital necessity to our country in engaging in war in the Far East. The General Board therefore believes that it should be given defenses of a naval base of the first order.[164]

This rather strongly worded opinion fell short of the War College position of 1910, but it represented a considerable advance from previous Board statements on the importance of Guam. However the gap which almost invariably separated the Board's naval base desiderata from actual accomplishments applied to Guam. In February of 1913 the Board classified Guam as "defenseless."[165] In June of 1913 the Board suggested that surveys be made to determine likely landing places for an enemy and corresponding defensive fortifications; Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels

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164. Dewey to Secnav, December 4, 1912, General Board File 403.
165. Dewey to Secnav, February 26, 1913, General Board File 408.

approved of the idea but did nothing to order the surveys.[166] In January of 1914 a board of Army and Navy officers recommended that as part of Guam's fortifications there be installed the following guns: 20 - 12" mortars; 4 - 14" guns; 6 - 6" guns; and 4 - 3" guns.[167] The General Board endorsed these recommendations[168] but in May of 1915 Commander E. S. Kellogg of the Office of Naval Intelligence reported that:

> the fixed defenses [on Guam] consist of two 6" naval guns on the outer end of Orote Peninsula; two 6" guns near the eastern end of Cabras Island, and a battery of four small guns on the mainland between Piti and Atantano.[169]

The wide gap which separated Guam's actual defenses in 1914 and the General Board's program for its urgent development as a first class naval base should come as no surprise. With the exception of Pearl Harbor, the General Board's naval base policy was largely ignored and unimplemented. While a good case could be made to show that its recommendations in this area of war planning were characterized by reason and restraint, Congress obviously preferred to exercise its power of the purse in different directions. As a

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166. Dewey to Secnav, June 11, 1913, General Board File 403; Secnav endorsement dated December 30, 1913; General Board Summary of Correspondence on the Defense of Guam, General Board File 422.
167. The Guam Board Report, January 26, 1914, General Board File 422.
168. Dewey to Secnav, June 26, 1914, General Board File 403.
169. Extract from a paper on Guam by Commander E. S. Kellogg, O. N. I. Register No. 5351, General Board Summary of Correspondence on the Defense of Guam, General Board

ult the Board's plans for a supportable battleline in the Eastern Caribbean and the Western Pacific were without effect and instead the real frontier shrunk to Honolulu in the West and the American shore line in the East.

CHAPTER VII

THE SHIPS

As was noted in an earlier chapter, the General Board did not at first address itself to the question of the Navy's shipbuilding policy although it was authorized to do so by Secretary of the Navy John D. Long's original letter of instructions.[1] Board members undoubtedly had some fixed ideas about the direction that the post-war Navy should take; and they might have been able to influence the appropriation for additional ships passed by Congress almost three months after the Board was authorized. But they were probably reluctant to take any action which might be interpreted as being competitive with the bureau structure. Since 1889, the responsibilities for developing the Navy's shipbuilding programs rested with the Board on Construction. It was composed mainly of bureau chiefs who, in Rear Admiral Henry C. Taylor's estimate, would resent any infringement on their functions and would defend themselves by demanding the curtailment or suspension of General Board activities.

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1. Chapter III, pp. 25-26. Secretary of the Navy (hereafter cited as Secnav) John D. Long to Admiral George Dewey, March 30, 1900, General Board File 401.

By October of 1900, however, the General Board felt that the factors favoring entrance into the field outweighed these encumbrances, and accordingly it made its first recommendations to Secretary Long. From then until 1914 the building programs of the Navy were of major concern to the Board, since the number and character of new ships had a direct bearing on the problems of strategy and war preparations.

There were several consistently held convictions which permeated the shipbuilding philosophy of the General Board. In the first place the Navy was considered to be a form of insurance policy or deterrent, and it should therefore be increased to "such strength as make it hazardous for any other nation to antagonize [the United States] by force of arms."[2] As the General Board observed:

> No Navy is so expensive as war. The amount of money necessary to build and maintain a Navy capable of securing peace is only a small fraction of the amount which war with a great power would cost in its immediate and subsequent obligations.[3]

It also thought that the size of the Navy should be tailored to the country's foreign policies and to the nations most likely to challenge them, and while it recognized that domestic politics and the state of the economy did in fact affect the Navy's growth, it refused to let

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2. Captain Asa Walker, "Preparation for War," unpublished mss., Naval War College, 1900, Naval War College Records, Mechanicsburg, Pa., Box 24.
3. Dewey to Secnav, April 21, 1909, General Board File 420-2.

them influence its recommendations.[4] The Board wanted a consistent national building policy for the Navy, not unlike Germany's, devoid of party politics, and "not affected by changes of administration." Board members despaired of the system which submitted their proposals to the scrutiny of an unpredictable Congress and a transitory secretaryship, and altered them in accordance with the compromises inherent in the democratic process.[5] They also resented the actions of the Secretaries who limited their proposals to what Congress would probably pass.[6] The Board tried to adhere to the idea of a long range goal, and, as a matter of fact, claimed in 1914 that many of its shipbuilding proposals of 1903 were still valid because of this approach.[7]

Another belief was that the Navy's strength would remain constant from the beginning of war until its end. Members were disturbed by those who would rely on the "genius of the people to meet and overcome emergencies of war" and called this propensity "unreasonable and delusive."[8] The General Board asserted that:

> little building can be accomplished after war has commenced. The Navy as the outbreak of war finds it, ... is in all essentials the Navy which must conduct the war, and by which success or failure will be determined.[9]

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4. Dewey to Secnav, September 25, 1912, General Board File 420-2.
5. Dewey to Secnav, March 28, 1913, General Board File 446.
6. General Board Minutes, August 15, 1913, Vol. 5, p. 146.
7. Dewey to Secnav, November 17, 1914, General Board File 420.
8. Walker, "Preparation for War," Naval War College, 1900.
9. Dewey to Secnav, April 21, 1909, General Board File 420-2.

There was some contemporary evidence to support this contention: it took three years from the date of authorization to place a battleship in commission and four years until it was ready to take its place in the line of battle;[10] yet the Spanish-American War lasted only a few months, and the Russo-Japanese conflict only about 18 months. The Board members never anticipated the potential and new technology of American industry to intensify its efforts and accelerate its production as it did during World War I.

The Board was also influenced by a desire to acquire for line officers a larger share in the determination of the quantity and quality of ships they might be called on to use in battle. Until the Board entered the field, the bureau chiefs gave Congress their own particular ideas as to the characteristics of ships and they were not always in agreement with one another. One was interested in ordnance, another in machinery, still another in the hull parameters. What was lacking was a unifying force and the practical viewpoint of those who had to use the ships.[11]

The universal standard of naval strength during the 1900 to 1914

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10. General Board memorandum for Secnav, undated but circa September, 1910, General Board File 420-2; Dewey to Secnav, December 7, 1912, General Board File 420.
11. U.S., Congress, House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Estimates Submitted by the Secretary of the Navy, 1909, 60th Cong., 2nd sess., House Doc. No. 3, (Washington, 1909), p. 69.

period was the battleship[12] and all of the General Board building program recommendations reflected this. At the same time the Board recognized the danger of placing too much emphasis on the battleship and too little on other types of vessels. While admitting that the "measure of the material portions of a fleet's power is expressed in the number of its first line battleships," the Board also maintained that "the life and continued power" of the battleship depended on the existence of the cruisers, destroyers, submarines, and auxiliaries.[13] The very first statement of General Board ship-building policy related to the disproportionate relationships among the various types of ships within the Navy and contained a plea for he restoration of some equilibrium.[14] So strongly did the Board feel about this that in 1903 it actually listed battleships as last in the "order of urgency." At the time the members were particularly impressed by the need for information seekers - the cruisers - for without them the battleships would never meet the enemy.[15] This attitude is significant for it rebuts the notion that the battleships mesmerized the naval planner. Quite the opposite: he was well aware that unless he had balance within the fleet structure, the

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12. The battleship was the largest and heaviest of all types of naval ships. It had great tonnage, long cruising range, highly seaworthy construction, carried the heaviest armor, and the largest naval guns afloat. In major fleet actions the battleships were designed to take position in the main battle line.
13. Dewey to Secnav, March 28, 1913, General Board File 446.
14. Dewey to Secnav, October 12, 1900, General Board File 420-2.
15. Dewey to Secnav, October 17, 1903, General Board File

battleship would be of little or no use. As one member pointed out:

> the Board insists that vessels of different types shall not be built at random ... but symmetrically constituted as a whole, battleships, scouts, colliers, torpedo boats ... . Without coal and information, for instance, the game may be lost however strong the battlefleet may be.[16]

In March of 1902, the General Board was stunned to learn that the Chief of the Bureau of Construction proudly noted in his annual report that the Navy had a total of 307 ships. The Board had been measuring the Navy's effective war strength at 59 ships. It voiced concern to the Secretary that the mathematics of the Chief of the Bureau of Construction would confuse the public and the legislators and lead them to think that the Navy was far stronger than it actually was.[17] The Board was pointing up the problem of statistics which plagued all of those who had any responsibility for the United States shipbuilding programs: how to estimate U. S. strength, and the strength of the other maritime powers by developing a formula for cost effectiveness which would not only guide the United States in planning its own program, but also indicate its standing with respect to the rest of the world. Similarly, the Board thought it advisable to develop acceptable guidelines which would help determine

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16. Rear Admiral Charles S. Sperry to son Charles, January 30, 1904, Sperry Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
17. Rear Admiral Robley D. Evans to Secnav, March 27, 1902, General Board File 420.

when ships were of no further service, and how much should be expended on repairs prior to scrapping.

In 1910 there were no less than seven formulas which assigned numerical values to a ship in accordance with its overall worth. Most based their calculations on four qualities: offensive power, defensive strength, speed, and radius of action. The General Board and Naval War College made an evaluation of all of them and found that "some betray a particular motive, such as to prove that the English [British] fleet is or is not equal to the 'two power' standard," and none were suitable. It was then decided to develop a new and effective formula. The quest, although long and studied, ended in lure. The project officer, Commander Frank Marble wrote:

> It appears then, from whatever point of view regarded that the military value of a ship of war is not susceptible of complete or definite mathematical expression. There are too many unknown quantities and two many variables to deduce an equation. Moreover, there is some danger of ascribing to empirical formulas wider authority than they are entitled to. A mathematical deduction has no more validity than the premises upon which it is founded; and a series of approximations or guesses does not become true because it is expressed in algebraic terms. .... If it were possible to agree upon a formula of military value, all navies would build sister ships.[18]

The Board decided to revert to the old system; that is to use as the basis for comparison the numbers of ships having the same general

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18. Memorandum by Commander Frank Marble, attached to letter, President Naval War College, Rear Admiral Raymond P. Rodgers, to Dewey, May 11, 1910, General Board File 420.

characteristics, emphasizing of course the pre-eminence of the battleship.

Age was also an important consideration in assessing strength. In the view of the Board, a ship was "born" not at launching, commissioning, or the laying of the keel but when the design was completed or when it was authorized by Congress. Because of the rapid progress of technology in speed capability, endurance, and gunpower, a ship would become obsolete, not because of its aging structure, but because of its aging design. Such was the case with the pre-Dreadnought battleships when the Dreadnought types were brought forth even though they were only a few years old. The Board estimated that, as a general rule, a battleship would have to be relegated to the "second line" for coast defense operations after ten years of commissioned service, and to the scrapheap after 20 years.[19] It presented the Secretary of the Navy with the following list of ship's life expectancies as measured from the date of congressional authorization:

	Years Active Service, 1st Line	Reserve[20] 2nd Line
Battleships/Battle Cruisers	14	10
Destroyers/Scouts	15	5
Submarines	12	5
Auxiliaries	25	5

19. Confidential General Board Memorandum for Secnav, June 30, 1912, General Board File 420-2.
20. Dewey to Secnav, December 7, 1912, General Board File 420.

The Board system of applying fixed periods on the limits of ships' useful lives was criticized by Rear Admiral Joseph Strauss, Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, because it did not consider the fact that some ships age faster than others owing to the type of service and maintenance given to them. Therefore determination as to further usefulness should be on an individual basis.[21] Naturally, the Board resisted this policy, for it would complicate the Board's replacement program based on a simple objective measurement, age, and submit it to the vagaries of the decisions of the several bureaus, each of which had an interest in a particular aspect of the ships and would therefore probably differ on an estimate as to their future value. Apart from this however, the General Board formula for determining the useful age of a battleship and of other type ships must be viewed with suspicion. If advances in technology made old designs obsolete why could not advances in technology permit the replacement of old equipment with new using the same hull for both. The Board assumed that the technological pace as demonstrated by the advent of the Dreadnought would extend indefinitely whereas the fact was that the Dreadnought was a quantum jump and not representative of the average technological progress.

The Board's building programs were directed principally at Germany, but from 1906 on also gave full consideration to the

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21. Chief Bureau of Ordnance to Aide for Material, January 10, 1914, General Board File 420.

Japanese "threat." The specific General Board proposals were usually justified by reference to its estimate of the comparative strength of the United States as opposed to the other leading maritime powers and particularly the possible adversaries. The first evaluation of this kind, forwarded in 1902, was not too optimistic for it ranked the United States seventh among the world's naval powers. This was based on the number of battleships and armored cruisers possessed by each nation. Rear Admiral Robley D. Evans, acting for Admiral Dewey, reported that "the showing was ominous ... and the gravity of the situation should be called to the attention of both the President and Congress."[22] Since 1900 Germany had considerably widened its lead over the United States by completing six battleships and two armored cruisers while the United States was adding only one major ship to its fleet.[23] A source of aggravation was the apparent unwillingness of the Congress to respond, for it authorized only two battleships and two armored cruisers in 1900 and none at all in 1901.[24] The growing gap between the American Navy and its most probable foe was dramatized by the Anglo-German intervention in Venezuela in late 1902 and early 1903. Most of the Board members were in the Caribbean at the time participating in the fleet

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22. Rear Admiral Robley D. Evans to Secnav, March 27, 1902, General Board File 420-2.
23. U.S., Congress, Senate, Navy Yearbook, 65th Cong., 3rd sess., Senate Doc. No. 418, (Washington, 1919), pp. 802-804.
24. Ibid., p. 160, 175.

maneuvers which they had organized. While they sympathized with the need for the application of some force against Venezuela, they thought the Germans had gone too far, and to them it confirmed their previous convictions as to German aggressiveness.[25] Both Admiral Dewey and his Aide, Commander Nathan Sargent felt the presence of American naval power prevented the Germans from going even further than they did.[26]

The Board returned to Washington in January of 1903 and began debating the size of the fleet which the Navy should have to counter the German "menace." Captain John E. Pillsbury and Commander Nathan Sargent proposed that "there be a gradual increase in the number of battleships until ... [there was] one for each state of the union."[27] At the time there were 45 states and three territories, but it was generally assumed that the latter would become states in the not too distant future. Other suggestions were made to fix the ultimate strength at 36 and 42 but they were voted down. Finally all members agreed that 48 should be the goal but they did not include a time limit nor associate the figure with the number of states.[28] The Board incorporated the opinion in a letter to Secretary of the Navy William H. Moody in which it was stated that "the defense of

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25. Diary of Commander Nathan Sargent, Aide to Admiral Dewey, December 18, 1902, Sargent Papers, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, Library of Congress.
26. Dewey to son George, January 4, 1903, Dewey Papers, Office of Naval History, Washington, D. C.; Diary of Nathan Sargent, memorandum entry in back of 1903 diary book, Sargent Papers.
27. General Board Minutes, January 31, 1903, Vol. 1, p. 237.
28. Ibid.

the coast, insular possessions, commerce and general maritime interests of the United States" required a fleet of 48 first-class battleships with a proportionate number of other vessels.[29] No further justification was offered.

At the time of this discussion, the effective German Fleet Law, enacted in 1900, called for a battleship strength of four squadrons of eight ships each, two fleet flagships, and four reserve battleships to be constructed by 1920.[30] A Naval War College study done prior to the General Board decision for 48 battleships, indicated that the American Navy should possess a force which would give "crushing superiority" over the Germans should the two nations ce each other in the Atlantic. It was felt that this objective could be met if the United States maintained a strength one and one-half times greater than Germany.[31] Excluding the two German flagships and four reserve battleships, this gave a total of 48 battleships.[32]

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29. Dewey to Secnav, February 9, 1903, General Board File 420-2.
30. Translation of German Fleet Law of 1900, attached to letter Dewey to Secnav, May 24, 1910, General Board File 420-2.
31. Memorandum by Lieutenant Commander W. Irving Chambers, undated but circa 1904, General Board File 420-2.
32. Although there is no indication in the General Board records for 1903 that this was in fact the method of computation, internal correspondence dated 1915 and labeled "unofficial memorandum as to the reasons which originally led the General Board to determine on 48 battleships," claims this to have been the rationale. This memorandum was produced in response to a charge by Congressman Finlay Gray in 1915 that the number 48 was derived not from an analysis of the threat, but as an assurance that each of the states would eventually have a battleship named for it. Gray was aware that there were only 45

The General Board's letter of February 1903, recommending a balanced fleet with 48 battleships, did not set a specific time limit by which the desired strength should be reached, but it did advocate a battleship construction rate of four per year. This would give a completed fleet of 48 in 1914, five years before the 1920 limit of the German Fleet Law of 1900.[33] In October of 1903, the Board altered its recommendation to two battleships per year with a target date of completion in 1919. The Board justified this decrease, not on the basis that four per year would be too much for Congress to digest, but because it would require an unrealistic personnel recruiting

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states in 1903, but stated that it was well known at the time that the three territories would eventually acquire statehood. Admiral Dewey attempted to refute Congressman Gray's allegation, not by reference to the unofficial memorandum and the German threat, but by quoting from a letter he had written to the Secretary of the Navy in November 1914, which reviewed the reasons for the 48 battleship policy. In that document Dewey stated that the number was fixed "by a calm and logical review of the policies and aims of the nation and the known laws and prospective developments and aims of other countries...." Why Dewey was not, in contrast to the unofficial memorandum, more specific in his explanation is not clear. Perhaps he was reluctant to cite Germany as a presumed enemy in the November 1914 letter because it was scheduled to be published in the widely read Annual Reports of the Navy Department, and any reference to Germany would have been contrary to the strict neutrality adopted by the Wilson Administration. General Board Memorandum, January 26, 1915, General Board File 420-2; U.S., Congress, House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Appropriation Bill, 63rd Cong., 3rd sess., House Doc. No. 13, (Washington, 1915), p. 1049; Dewey to Secnav, November 17, 1914, General Board File 420-2; Dewey to Congressman Lemuel Padgett, January 21, 1915, General Board File 420-2.

33. Dewey to Secnav, February 9, 1903, General Board File 420-2.

and training rate.[34] Nor did the Board's 1903 plans take into consideration the problem of battleship replacement due to age, because "experience had not yet ... demonstrated the effective life of battleships, nor had any exhaustive study been made of it."[35] It was not until 1910 that the Board developed standards, patterned on the practice of Germany, which would require the scrapping of all battleships 20 years or older.[36] While this did not alter the ultimate goal of 48 battleships, it did mean that Congress would have to appropriate for more than two per year to achieve it by 1919.

Even two battleships per year was more than Congress was willing to accept, and only a few months after the Board first proed its ambitious scheme, it found itself one battleship behind the desired annual rate of construction. Undaunted, the Board added the deficiency to its recommendation for the following year and suggested the construction of three battleships; Congress appropriated for only two. This still left a gap of one, which the Board tried to bridge in 1905 by recommending three battleships, but Congress would only authorize one, thus widening the difference to three.

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34. Dewey to Secnav, October 17, 1903, General Board File 420-2.
35. Rear Admiral W.H.H. Southerland, Senior Member Present General Board to Secnav, July 1, 1914, General Board File 420-2.
36. Dewey to Secnav, May 24, 1910, General Board File 420-2. The 1908 revision to the German Fleet Law of 1900 provided that "excepting cases of losses of ships, battleships ... shall be replaced after 20 years." Translation of German Fleet Law of 1900, as amended in 1906 and 1908, attached to above letter.

By 1905 Great Britain began building a revolutionary new battleship, the Dreadnought, which changed the standards by which naval strength was judged. The Board, while still adhering to the goal of 48 battleships, hoped to use the new index of power as a lever to convince the Navy Department and Congress to accelerate the lagging building program. Admiral Dewey advised the Secretary of the Navy that, on the basis of Dreadnought types authorized by the leading maritime nations, the United States stood fifth after England, France, Germany, and Japan. He warned that if Congress continued at the pace of one battleship per year, Germany would have thirteen more of the new class by 1915.[37] However, using the criterion of total tonnage, a measurement seldom used by the Board, the United States was at the time the third ranked naval power, ahead of Germany, and would soon be second only to Great Britain.[38] In addition, the cost-conscious Congress had to consider the greatly increased expense of the new type battleship; slightly more than three of the old class could be purchased for the price of two of the Dreadnought type.[39] The Congress was evidently more impressed with cost and overall tonnage than with the argument of the General Board, and it authorized only one battleship instead of the two recommended.[40]

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37. Dewey to Secnav, October 2, 1906, General Board File 420-2.
38. Statistics of Relative Tonnages printed in George T. Davis, A Navy Second to None, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Cougar, 1940), pp. 171-172.
39. The total cost of the USS Florida was $10,359,979.40. The pre-Dreadnought Indiana cost $5,799,374.26. Navy Year Book, 1917 and 1918, p. 758.

Another opportunity to exert pressure on the Secretary and Congress arose in 1906 with the "crisis" with Japan. The Board felt that it now had to plan for a "threat" in each ocean and all of the old arguments in support of the 48 battleship program were augmented by an appeal for a "two-ocean standard" to protect both coasts.[41] The specific proposals called for four battleships and a proportionate mixture of supporting vessels.[42] It was the largest program in terms of dollars ever brought forward by the Board; its total cost amounted to about $63,000,000, a figure greater than the total expenditures for the entire Navy Department in 1901 and well over one-half of the Navy's total outlay for 1906.[43] Although Secretary of the Navy Victor Metcalf endorsed in large measure the Board suggestion, Congress did not express the same sense of urgency, and it cut the program by about one-half.[44]

The year 1908 marks the start of the German drive to overtake the United States in the naval arms race. In terms of tonnage built and building it still lagged behind the United States, but would overtake it in 1909 and maintain second position among the world's powers through 1914. During the period from 1908 to 1914 the Germans spent $100,000,000, more dollars for naval ship construction than

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41. Dewey to Secnav, April 25, 1907, General Board File 420-1.
42. Dewey to Secnav, September 26, 1907, General Board File 420-2.
43. U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, 1789-1945, (Washington, 1949), p. 299.
44. Navy Yearbook, 1917 and 1918, pp. 281-283.

the United States. Even Japan, whose expenditures were admittedly no match for those of the United States and Germany, quintupled their new construction budget between 1906 and 1907.[45] All of this disturbed the members of the General Board deeply, particularly when coupled with their image of an excessively parsimonious Congress.

In May of 1910 the Board reviewed for Secretary of the Navy George Meyer the naval armaments race and reported that the expansions of the Japanese and German fleets, representing "the only maritime powers that the United States is likely to go to war with," was a source of "potential danger to the United States and must be met with proportionate increases in U. S. Naval strength and th. establishment of a two ocean fleet." While the Board admitted that the Navy had enough ships to confront Japan in the Pacific, it stated unequivocally that they could not be properly supported because of the inadequate logistic facilities. Until these were developed, and until the Panama Canal with its well fortified base facilities was available, the Board could not be very sanguine about the outcome if war came with Japan.

The Board's estimate with respect to Germany was even less optimistic. It had considered the U. S. Navy adequate to meet any German aggression until 1908, but since then the Germans had made greater strides than the United States in building Dreadnought type

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45. Memorandum from the Office of Naval Intelligence, June 7, 1913, General Board File 429.

battleships and powerful battle cruisers. The Board predicted that by 1920, unless the American programs were drastically accelerated, the United States would have to face a German fleet of 34 heavy ships, a total far greater than the American fleet at its present state of growth of one or two battleships per year.[46] The Board recommended the construction of four battleships, sixteen destroyers (to narrow the gap of ninety-eight thought needed for a balanced fleet), and twenty-one other types of vessels. Congress cut the program by one-half and authorized two battleships, eight destroyers and eleven other vessels.[47]

In 1912, actual German naval tonnage exceeded that of the United States for the first time since 1905.[48] In the same year the Board made an eight year projection of the order of battle of the United States, Germany and Japan based on the German and Japanese building plans, and on the continuance of the Congressional appropriations pattern of the past. A tabular summary of its findings is listed below:

United States		Germany	Japan
21 Dreadnought battleships	to oppose	39	23 (Battleship/ battle cruiser)
15 pre-Dreadnought battleships	to oppose	16	13
64 destroyers	to oppose	144	122
3 fast scout cruisers	to oppose	44	16
65 coast defense submarines	to oppose	72	24

46. Dewey to Secnav, May 24, 1910, General Board File 420-2.
47. Badger to Secnav, April 2, 1920, General Board File 420-2.
48. Statistics of Relative Tonnage printed in Davis, A Navy Second to None, p. 172.

In submitting this information to the Secretary, Admiral Dewey wrote:

> the General Board does not believe that it is the national sense that this condition of inferiority should be allowed to obtain. It does not believe that it is the intent to put forth pretensions in respect of policy that cannot be made good against challenge. It does not believe that the United States, having attained at an expenditure of almost two billions of dollars, a position as the second naval power of the world, should refuse the expenditure necessary to maintain that position, because other nations, recognizing the advantages of naval strength have undertaken to dispute it. ... It is not however, the province of the General Board to enter into political and economic considerations; but solely, as a military board, to advise clearly as to the strength of the naval force which it deems indispensable to meet the possible contingencies of the immediate future.[49]

The clear advice to which Admiral Dewey referred was for a massive five year building program to make up for the neglects of the past and to ensure that by 1920 the American Navy would have "measurable equality to the German and Japanese fleets." The program was defined as an "emergency" one and absolutely essential to return the United States to second place among the world's powers. The size of the Board's program was immense and so was the cost: an average yearly expenditure of $100,000,000 or almost 80 per cent of the Navy's total budget for 1911. The Board secondly suggested that one-half of this amount be financed by "an extension of the Panama bond issue," arguing that the Navy would guarantee the safety of the American commerce which would use the Canal, and

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49. Memorandum from General Board to Secnav on Building Program, 1913-1917, September 25, 1912, General Board File 420-2.

protect the Canal's security from any challenges from either Japan or Germany.[50]

The Board's pleas produced a favorable reaction from Secretary George Meyer,[51] but went largely unanswered in Congress where funds were granted for only one battleship.[52] A little over three weeks after Congress acted, Admiral Dewey, on the General Board's behalf, addressed a long letter to the new Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, criticising the Congress and past administrations for playing politics with the Navy, and for relegating the growth of the fleet to "laws of expediency to meet temporary emergencies" rather than the real needs of the nation. He appealed to Mr. Daniels to support the long range goals which the Board had been advocating, including the specific one of 48 battleships. He implied that unless those objectives were met the government would have to "abandon or modify" one or more of the following "well-established national policies: no entangling alliances; the Monroe Doctrine; the Open Door in the Far East; Asiatic Exclusion; exclusive military control of the Panama Canal and its contiguous waters." Admiral Dewey went on to say that:

> the forecast of the Board with regard to naval development has proved remarkably accurate. The absence of any definite

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50. Memorandum from General Board to Secnav on Building Program 1913-1917, September 25, 1912, General Board File 420-2.
51. U.S., Navy Department, Annual Reports, 1912, (Washington, 1912), p. 26.
52. Navy Yearbook, 1917 and 1918, p. 365.

> naval policy in our past, except in the General Board, and the failure of the people, the Congress and the Executive Government to recognize the necessity for such a policy, has already placed us in a position of inferiority, which may lead to war; and this inferiority is progressive and will continue to increase until the necessity for a definite policy is recognized, and that policy put into operation.[53]

Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels could not concur with the General Board's rather dismal outlook. His construction policy was based on what he called the "golden mean."[54] By this he meant that he would present to Congress a program which would steer a course between the Scylla of unilateral withdrawal from the naval arms race and the Charybdis of unrestrained naval competition with its concomitant burden on the American taxpayers. From the viewpoint of the General Board however Daniels' course was hardly midway, for he reduced the Board's battleship construction by one-half and, overall, approved only 11 of 29 ships.[55] Congress was slightly more generous and authorized two of the four battleships and 17 of the total 39 vessels.[56] Board requests for 1914 followed a similar pattern; of four battleships and forty-five other ships requested, Daniels approved two battleships and 16 additional vessels; and Congress appropriated for two battleships and 25 of other classes.[57]

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53. Dewey to Secnav, March 28, 1913, General Board File 446.
54. U.S., Navy Department, Annual Reports for the Fiscal Year 1913, (Washington, 1914), p. 10.
55. Badger to Secnav, April 2, 1920, General Board File 420-2.
56. Navy Yearbook, 1917 and 1918, p.
57. Badger to Secnav, April 2, 1920, General Board File 420-2.

The Congressional debates on the naval programs of 1913 and 1914 were not untypical of those in the fourteen preceeding years. Members decided along party and geographic lines. The Republicans, the minority in both houses, generally stood on the large-navy side of the aisle, while the Democrats were, nominally at least, small-navy proponents. Proximity of the individual to the sea appeared to be a determining factor; for example, many Democrats from the eastern seaboard were advocates of a large navy while many Republicans from the mid-western states voted with the small-navy faction.[58] The non-navalists favored a policy of retrechment whereby funds would be devoted primarily to the improvement of ship, personnel, and equipment quality rather than to purely quantitative increases. They thought that a smaller navy would be entirely adequate for national security since expanding foreign trade was reducing the likelihood of war; moreover the impregnability of coastal defenses coupled with geographical isolation of the United States made any attack on the country "inconceivable."[59] It was implied that the drive for more ships arose out of a selfish profit motive on the part of the nation's shipbuilders and steel trust.[60] The Democrats, in a minority report of the House Naval Affairs

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58. Sprout, Harold and Magaret, The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), p. 264.
59. U.S., Congress, House, Report by House Naval Affairs Committee on Naval Appropriation Bill, monthly report (part 2), 62nd Cong., 3rd sess., House Report No. 1557, (Washington, 1913), p. 2.
60. Ibid., p. 10.

Committee, accused the Navy Department of statistical chicanery in presenting figures designed to show a fleet inferior to Germany's.[61] The other extreme represented by a former naval officer and hero of the Spanish-American War, Richmond B. Hobson, surpassed even the General Board in defining the desired size of American naval power. His formula for the growth of the fleet was as simple as it was radical: the Navy's power should be equal to the combined strength of the Japanese and German navies.[62] The General Board had, as late as 1910, rejected this two power formula.[63]

The majority of the members of Congress took a position somewhere in between. One of these, Congressman William Williams, addressing his colleagues stated that:

> we may well differ as to the extent of our Navy...and I confess that when I reach the comparative stage, and undertake to offset or counterbalance ship against ship, gun against gun, and man against man, in the light of our isolation, unaccessibility to attack, and numerous other conditions which only the mind can conjecture, and which may or may not exist at the time of actual hostilities, I become confused and frankly admit that there is no rule by which the adequacy of any navy can be determined with any precision, accuracy or certainty, and I have reached the deliberate conclusion that the only safe course to pursue is to maintain a navy of sufficient size to deter the enemy from making war upon us, and of sufficient strength to cope successfully with any fleet that may be sent against us.[64]

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61. U.S., Congress, House, Report by House Naval Affairs Committee on Naval Appropriation Bill, 63rd Cong., 2nd sess., House Report No. 314, (Washington, 1914), p. 57, 65-67.
62. U.S., Congressional Record, 62nd Cong., 3rd sess., Vol. 49, pt. 4, (February 22, 1913), p. 3705.
63. Confidential Memorandum from General Board to Secnav attached to letter Dewey to Secnav, May 24, 1910, General Board File 420-2.
64. U.S., Congressional Record, 63rd Cong., 2nd sess. Vol. 51

Mr. Williams theory of the "safe course" was no different than reasoning of the General Board; however when it came to a judgment as to the number and kinds of ships to constitute the fleet it was clear that for the 1900 to 1914 period the differences between the Board and Congress were large indeed. By July of 1914, and nine battleships short of its projections, the Board recognized the futility of insisting on its 1919 target date and decided to change it to 1923.[65] A few months later, after war broke out in Europe, the Board dropped all reference to the 48 battleship standard and instead called for a Navy "strong enough to meet on equal terms the strongest possible adversary."[66]

There is no evidence to indicate that any of the Secretaries of the Navy approved of the General Board's long range program. Neither Daniels nor John D. Long thought much of the idea. The latter preferred to "move along as the necessities require."[67] His successor, William H. Moody felt that a long range program like the German system would be desirable but difficult to implement because of the Congressional practice of making appropriations on an annual basis.[68] George Meyer came closest in 1912 when he declared that

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65. Rear Admiral W. H. H. Southerland, Senior Member Present General Board to Secnav, July 1, 1914, General Board File 420-2.
66. Dewey to Secnav, November 17, 1914, General Board File 420-2.
67. U.S., Congress, House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Appropriation Bill Subjects, 57th Cong., 1st sess., House Doc. No. 135, (Washington, 1902), p. 19.
68. U.S., Congress, House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Appropriation Bill Subjects, 57th Cong., 2nd sess., House Doc. No. 11, (Washington, 1903), p. 80.

"a total of 41 battleships, with a proportional number of other fighting auxiliary vessels is the least that will place [the United States] on a safe basis in its relations with other world powers."[69] Meyer's selection of the number 41 was no accident. At the time this was also the German goal. Meyer was therefore advocating an American fleet equal in size to Germany's, and was anticipating the standard proposed by the General Board in late 1914.

Adherence to the program of 48 battleships and a suitable number of other ships through an 11 year period, marked by rather dramatic changes which appeared to increase rather than lessen the "threat" is indeed remarkable. Japan was not considered one of the likely enemies in 1903, and the Board's long range building program was not geared to the size of its naval establishment. A few years later Japan joined the Board's list of probable foes and remained on it through 1914 without precipitating a concomitant adjustment in the original program. In 1903, Germany's projected battle fleet was to consist of 32 battleships and 2 fleet flagships by 1920.[70] In 1908 this was revised to 37 battleships by 1915, and in 1912 revised still further so that by 1920 her fleet would have 41 battleships.[71] In addition, since 1909, the German Navy began

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69. U.S., Navy Department, Annual Reports, 1912, (Washington, 1913), p. 25.
70. Arthur J. Marder, From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 106.
71. Viscount Hythe, ed., The Naval Annual 1914, (London: William Clowes and Sons, Limited, 1914), p. 34.

adding powerful battle cruisers to her forces and planned to have 11 in commission by 1920[72] While these ships were not as potent as a battleship, they were not to be taken lightly. The Office of Naval Intelligence considered each of them to be the equivalent of one-half a battleship.[73] Thus, the revisions to the German Fleet Laws, from the time when the Board first recommended a fleet of 48 battleships, altered the German Navy's ultimate strength from 34 battleships to the equivalent of 46.5 battleships, an increase of over 35%. Yet through all of this the Board remained convinced that its 1903 proposals were still valid.

The Board explained these apparent incongruities by stating that it had in fact taken these changes into account but because

> of the political relations which developed between Germany and Japan, and of the unprobability of any concerted attack by these two nations in the Atlantic and Pacific at the same time, and also in view of the increased mobility of [the United States] fleet due to the approaching completion of the Panama Canal, ... [the Board felt] that it was unnecessary to increase its original estimate of 48 battleships... .[74]

During the period under study, the battleship - the key ship of the fleet - underwent a revolutionary transformation; when the Board was organized in 1900, the newest in commission was the Kentucky.

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72. Viscount Hythe, ed., The Naval Annual 1914, (London: William Clowes and Sons, Limited, 1914), p. 34.
73. Office of Naval Intelligence, Memorandum on Comparison of Ship Values, December 4, 1914, General Board File 420.
74. General Board Memorandum, January 26, 1915, General Board File 420-2.

Defined by Congress as a "sea-going coast line battleship," she was 376 feet long, displaced 11,500 tons, had a top speed of 16 knots with reciprocating coal-fired engines, a draft of 23 feet, carried a multiple-caliber main battery of 13-inch, 8-inch, and 5-inch weapons, and cost 4.4 million dollars.[75] In contrast, the New Mexico, authorized by Congress in June of 1914, and described as a "first-class" battleship, displaced three times as much water, was 250 feet longer, had a maximum speed of 21 knots on oil-fired turbines, drew seven feet more water, mounted a single caliber main battery consisting of twelve 14-inch guns, and cost 12.6 million dollars.[76] The Office of Naval Intelligence, in assessing the offensive power of both ships, assigned the New Mexico a strength eight times greater than that possessed by the Kentucky.[77]

These two ships were representative of two eras, dramatically separated by the completion of the British battleship Dreadnought in December, 1906. Although the differences between them encompassed the entire range of ship characteristics, the most important change which occurred was in offensive power and specifically the main battery armament. In the pre-Dreadnought days, a

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75. U.S., Navy Department, Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, Vol. 1, (Washington, 1959), p. 190; Navy Yearbook, 1917 and 1918, p. 790.
76. Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, Vol. 1, pp. 196-197; Navy Yearbook, 1917 and 1918, p. 792.
77. Office of Naval Intelligence, Memorandum on Comparision of Ship Values, December 4, 1914, General Board File 420.

battleship had a multiplicity of calibers in her main gun battery, each with an assigned function. Not much thought had been given to the concentration of power in a single large caliber because of the generally accepted rule that the larger the caliber, the less the hitting capacity.[78] Besides, the anticipated open-fire range in battle was 3,000 yards or less, well within the capability of the smaller caliber rapid-fire weapons.[79] However, the hodgepodge of weaponry brought with it many disadvantages: not all of the guns could be fired simultaneously because of mutual interference problems; several types of weapons meant multiplication of fire control systems, with all the problems that entailed; spotting of shell splashes was difficult; ammunition logistics became extremely complicated; superstructures were cluttered and poorly designed; hulls were so heavily laden with turrets that ships had hardly enough freeboard to keep their weapons usable in heavy seas; and offensive power was limited.

There were some stirrings in the world of naval architecture as early as 1902 over the advantages of the purification of the main batteries. In that year Rear Admiral Francis T. Bowles, Chief of the Bureau of Construction and Repair had rough sketch designs prepared for a battleship with 10-inch guns for a primary battery and

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78. Commander William S. Sims to President Theodore Roosevelt, September 24, 1904, William S. Sims Papers, Office of Naval History, Washington, D. C.
79. Arthur J. Marder, The Anatomy of British Sea Power, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940), p. 521.

no intermediate caliber guns.[80] In the same year, Commander Homer C. Poundstone prepared a paper advocating the adoption of the single caliber battery,[81] and in 1903 the Italian naval architect Colonel Vittorio Cunniberti published an article in Jane's Fighting Ships, advocating for the British Navy a battleship mounting an all-big-gun armament of twelve 12-inch rifles.[82]

The 1903 Summer Conference at the Naval War College had considered a proposal by Lieutenant Commander W. Irving Chambers for an all-big-gun ship carrying twelve 12-inch or 11-inch guns with a six salvo end fire and an eight salvo broadside.[83] While Chambers' War College colleagues did not accept his ideas without qualifications, they seemed to think his proposal well worth investigating. It appeared to them that the intermediate battery was useful only at close range, and even at these distances, it could not penetrate the belt armor of a battleship. Furthermore torpedoes were being developed with effective ranges exceeding those of the intermediate guns. This meant that torpedo boats could fire at the battleships and remain free from the hazard of the former's intermediate batteries. In addition, gunnery and fire control

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80. Board on Construction to Secnav, September 26, 1904, General Board File 420-2.
81. Tracy B. Kittredge, "Biography of Admiral Sims," (unpublished mss., Office of Naval History, Washington, D.C.), p. 610.
82. Janes Fighting Ships, 1903, pp. 310-318.
83. Battleship Plan by Lieutenant Commander W. Irving Chambers, July 1903. Blueprint in General Board File 420-6, January 26, 1904.

practices in the American and foreign navies revealed an increasing curacy of the longer range weapons. Therefore it might be advisable to remove the intermediate batteries and concentrate gun power in the heavier caliber weapons. In fact, the War College staff estimated that Chambers' ship, which would do precisely that, would be up to three times more effective than the best-armed battleship then in commission.[84] Rear Admiral Henry C. Taylor and the other members of the General Board were "favorably impressed" with Chambers' proposals, but they decided that no mention of this "new and untried type" be made in their building program recommendations then being prepared for the Secretary of the Navy.[85] One Board member, Rear Admiral French E. Chadwick, who was President of the Naval War College when Chambers developed his concept, and had become converted to the all-big-gun idea, kept insisting on the virtues of the new type ship and finally persuaded the General Board to adopt a resolution in January of 1904 asking the Secretary of the Navy to direct the Bureau of Construction and Repair to prepare feasibility designs.[86] A letter to this effect was sent to Secretary Moody,[87] concurred in by him, and sent on to Chief Constructor

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84. U. S. Naval War College, "Solution to the Problem of 1903," Part VIII, (unpublished mss., Naval War College, 1903), Naval War College Records, Federal Records Center, Mechanicsburg, Pa., Box 45, 71.
85. General Board Minutes, October 16, 1903, Vol. 1, pp. 349-350.
86. General Board Minutes, January 26, 1904, Vol. 1, p. 394.
87. Dewey to Secnav, January 26, 1904, General Board File 420-6.

Washington L. Capps.[88] Capps did nothing at all about the matter and it rested in limbo until September of 1904 when Captain Charles S. Sperry, a member of the Board, complained to the new Secretary of the Navy, Paul Morton that Capps had completely ignored the Board's request;[89] then "bells rang and things began to move."[90] Morton withdrew the matter from Capps purview and passed it on to the Board on Construction.[91] However Capps was also a member of that organization and, in fact, his thinking was fairly representative of its membership. All resented the General Board's interference in their design function, and they were bound and determined to delay as long as they could. The Board on Construction told Morton that the Bureau would work on the plans when time permitted, and it suggested that the matter be referred back to Capps.[92] Meanwhile, Morton had apparently left Washington and Charles H. Darling, his assistant was acting for him. As has been indicated,[93] he too resented the expansionary tendencies of the General Board, and it was probably this thinking which prompted him to tell Capps to stand easy and not to work on the Dreadnought

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88. Charles H. Darling, Acting Secnav to Capps, February 1, 1904, General Board File 420-6.
89. Harry S. Knapp to Commander William S. Sims, July 9, 1908, Sims Papers.
90. Ibid.
91. Morton to Board on Construction, September 21, 1904, General Board File 420-6.
92. Board on Construction to Secnav, September 27, 1904, General Board File 420-6.
93. Chapter II, p. 62.

design until the work load eased.[94] On September 29, 1904 Dewey asked Morton once again to determine the status of the designs, since the General Board was anxious to make a judgment whether or not it should include an all-big-gun battleship in its building recommendations soon due in his office.[95] Capps explained to Morton that his people were still overworked, that it would take six months of continuous application to produce the plans, but that the work load would not permit him to begin now. He did however indicate that rough sketch plans were available, but not detailed enough to permit a valid judgment as to the relative merit of the ship.[96]

Meanwhile the General Board began evaluating the results coming in on the sea engagements of the Russo-Japanese War. They seemed to show that the large caliber weapons were much more accurate than had been expected; in fact the damage to the Russian ships came preponderantly from the large guns and at ranges far exceeding the effective fire zones of the intermediate batteries. The Board therefore recommended that no intermediate batteries be installed on future battleships.[97] But it was unwilling to go along

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94. Darling to Capps, September 28, 1904, General Board File 420-6.
95. Dewey to Morton, September 29, 1904, General Board File 420-6.
96. Capps to Morton, October 8, 1904, General Board File 420-5.
97. The Navy Department was slow to accept even this change for as late as January, 1905 Secretary of the Navy Paul Morton advised Congress that he favored retention of the intermediate battery. U.S., Congress, House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Appropriation Bill Subjects, 58th Cong., 3rd sess., House Doc. No. 62, (Washington, 1905), p. 540.

with the uniform large caliber system of Lieutenant Commander Chambers for two reasons: it had not yet received the technical information on which to base a decision; and it still saw a strong advantage in preserving "homogeneity of squadrons" by keeping the speed, displacement, steaming radius, and maneuvering qualities the same as those possessed by the recently completed battleships of the Connecticut class. In order to keep the design of the new ship within these parameters, and maximize gun power, the Board thought it necessary to install a main battery of 10-inch and 12-inch guns. If a homogeneous 12-inch main battery were installed in a 16,000 ton ship, it would have to be limited to eight rifles, a number thought by the members too small. The Board cautioned the Secretary that its recommendations were tentative in nature, and confirmation would have to await the recepit of the information which had long ago been requested from the Bureau on Construction.[98]

While this debate was going on in the U.S. Navy, the British were moving ahead on the development of a ship conforming to the ideas of Bowles, Poundstone, Cunniberti, and Chambers. Because of the close political relations between Great Britain and Japan, British naval officers were permitted front row seats at the naval actions of the Russo-Japanese War. They saw evidence of the great destructive power of the primary batteries of the Japanese ships;

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98. Dewey to Secnav, October 28, 1904, General Board File 420-2.

they noted the almost complete ineffectiveness of the intermediate eapons; and they learned from viewing the remains of Admiral Rojestvensky's once proud Baltic fleet what poor design could do to ships in battle.[99] This experience provided confirmation of earlier British naval thinking that the all-big-gun ship had great merit and should be built. Designs were drawn for a battleship displacing 17,900 tons, (the largest up to that time), mounting ten 12-inch guns, and with turbine engines which would propel it at speeds up to 21 knots. It was christened Dreadnought and joined the Royal Navy in December of 1906, completely altering the character of the naval arms race. Here was a ship which made all that came before weak by comparison. She could fire three times as much steel forward and twice as much abeam as the most powerful battleship ever built; she had a two knot margin over her fastest rivals; and she was the first ship ever constructed with the economical and flexible turbine engine.[100]

The very month and year that Dreadnought joined the fleet, the keel was laid for the American battleships South Carolina and Michigan. They were also all-big-gun ships but not of the class of their English counterpart. They carried only eight 12-inch guns on a 16,000 ton hull, and had a conventional power plant which gave two

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99. Commander William S. Sims to Chief Bureau of Navigation, July 12, 1907, General Board File 428.
100. Marder, Anatomy of British Sea Power, pp. 530-534.

knots less speed than the Dreadnought. Before the details for these two ships were developed, the General Board had taken a position significantly different from the tentative one given to the Secretary of the Navy in October of 1904. But it took a year to do it because of the incredible dilatoriness of the bureau structure. In June of 1905 Admiral Dewey had once again complained to the Secretary Morton that Capps had not yet forwarded the designs requested 18 months before.[101] Capps assured the Secretary that they were on the way.[102] When they had not come on July 7th, a member of the General Board called Capps and asked what had happened. Capps reassured him that they had been sent on June 26th and should have arrived. Dewey reported the situation to Morton's successor, Charles J. Bonaparte; he in turn asked Capps for an explanation. Capps answered that the plans had been found; they had been "mis-addressed" to the Judge Advocate General's office.[103] The Board finally received the long sought sketch plans on July 8, 1905, a year and one half and three Secretaries of the Navy after the original request.[104]

Receipt of Capps' sketches, the additional battle lessons drawn from the Russo-Japanese War, and the knowledge of the British

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101. Dewey to Secnav, June 10, 1905, General Board File 420-6.
102. Capps to Secnav, June 26, 1905, General Board File 420-6.
103. Capps to Secnav, July 15, 1905, General Board File 420-6.
104. Capps to Dewey, July 8, 1905, General Board File 420-6.

Dreadnought prompted the General Board to modify its October 1904 recommendation and to opt completely and wholeheartedly for the revolutionary new battleship. Dewey saw the war as proving the worth of "big ships, more big guns, and good shooting." He admitted that he had not felt this way earlier but now realized that the "modern battle is fought at a range of three or four miles," and it would be the large all-big-gun ships like the Dreadnought that "decide the battle."[105] So strongly did he and the Board feel about it that they did not want to wait until the next battleships were authorized by Congress. Instead, they recommended that the 16,000 ton South Carolina and Michigan, whose keels were not yet laid, be modified to carry twelve 12-inch guns (vice eight) on a displacement of 18,000 tons.[106] Inexplicably, Secretary of the Navy Charles D. Bonaparte waited six weeks to forward this request to the Board on Construction for evaluation. The members of this body flatly rejected the suggestions of the General Board, citing as one of the main reasons "the structural difficulties involved in suitably locating additional 12-inch turrets...." The Board on Construction defended the design of the South Carolina and Michigan and claimed for it a superiority over the Dreadnought in every particular but speed and end-on fire.[107] This was more

105. New York Herald, September 22, 1905, Dewey Scrapbook, Dewey Papers. Dewey confided to Rear Admiral Caspar F. Goodrich that he thought 40,000 ton battleships would be in the fleet one day. Dewey to Goodrich, November 17, 1905, Dewey Papers.
106. Dewey to Secnav, September 30, 1905, General Board File 420-2.
107. Board on Construction to Secnav, November 23, 1905, General Board File 420-2.

than a slight exaggeration, for the two classes were equal in broadside power, the Dreadnought had a better power plant, and its guns were placed higher above the water thus making them usable in heavy seas. More importantly, the English had the Dreadnought as part of its fleet in 1906; the Michigan and South Carolina did not join American naval forces until four years later.[108]

In October of 1905, the General Board again recommended a Dreadnought type ship with ten 12-inch guns, a broadside of at least nine salvos, a speed of not less than 19 knots, and a freeboard significantly higher than that of the Michigan and South Carolina.[109] The resistance to the large battleship still ran high, not only within the bureau hierarchy, but in Congress, the White House, and among some "big navy" men like Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan. As early as 1902 Mahan warned President Roosevelt that the trend within the Navy to increase the battleship in size was harmful, for with it would come an increase in cost and a consequent reduction in the number of battleships authorized by Congress. He emphasized the importance of augmenting the Navy's offensive power by increasing numbers of ships rather than purely through the improved design of fewer ships.[110] He analyzed the sea battles of the Russo-Japanese War and argued that

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108. William Hovgaard, Modern History of War Ships, (London: E. &F. N. Spon, Ltd., 1920), pp. 140, 146-147.
109. Dewey to Secnav, October 28, 1905, General Board File 420-2.
110. Mahan to Roosevelt, October 16, 1902, General Board File 420-6.

they proved the importance of homogeneity, the value of the intermediate battery, and the virtue of numbers over size.[111] Mahan's reputation was so great that his opposition threatened to postpone further evolution of the large battleship. President Roosevelt, a long-time disciple of the "Mahan School," told Secretary of the Navy Charles J. Bonaparte that he had never been "quite as rabid a big-ship man as some of [the] experts."[112] He expressed concern over the removal of the intermediate battery and asked the General Board to reassure him that the United States was doing the right thing.[113] Members of Congress were disturbed, by not only the increased cost of the new ships, but with their deeper draft. Those who still thought of the battleship as primarily a protector of continental ports feared that the larger ships would not be able to protect the coasts as well as their forerunners.[114]

Much of the doubt began to disappear with the publication of a rebuttal to Mahan's arguments. It was written by Lieutenant Commander William S. Sims, one of the Navy's foremost gunnery experts and an aide to President Roosevelt. Exposing a number of factual and deductive errors in Mahan's article, Sims made a very persuasive

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111. Alfred T. Mahan, "Reflections, Historic and Other, Suggested by the Battle of the Japan Sea," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 32 (June, 1906), pp. 447-471.
112. Roosevelt to Bonaparte, August 20, 1906, Charles J. Bonaparte Collection, Library of Congress.
113. Roosevelt to Rear Admiral George A. Converse, September 10, 1906, General Board File 420-3.
114. U.S., Congress, House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Estimates Submitted by the Secretary of the Navy, 59th Cong., 2nd sess., House Doc. No. 14, (Washington, 1907), p. 303.

case for the all-big-gun ship.[115] President Roosevelt was won o ,[116] and he endorsed the Dreadnought design in a letter to the Chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, George E. Foss.[117] Congress was, by this time, also well aware that the United States was the only one of the leading maritime powers which had not yet made a decision to adopt in full the Dreadnought concept. Final and firm acceptance of a new direction for American naval building policy was represented by the keel laying of the Delaware in November of 1907. She was the first ship of the modern Navy on which Congress placed no restriction as to displacement. When finally completed in April of 1910, she was the most powerful ship in the world and marked the beginning of a new era of remarkable growth in American battleship power, size, and flexibility; a growth which generally satisfied the General Board planners.[118]

The General Board held the lightly armed, high speed protected or scout cruiser in very high regard and, during the period from 1900 to 1914, included some of this type in almost every year's

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115. William S. Sims, "The Inherent Tactical Qualities of All-Big-Gun, One-Caliber Battleships of High Speed, Large Displacement, and Gun-Power," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 32 (December, 1906), pp. 1337-1366.
116. Roosevelt to Sims, September 27, 1906, Sims Papers.
117. Roosevelt to Foss, published in U.S., Congress, House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Estimates Submitted by the Secretary of the Navy, 59th Cong., 2nd sess., House Doc. No. 39, (Washington, 1907), pp. 367-370.
18. Office of Naval Intelligence, Memorandum on Comparison of Ship Values, December 4, 1914, General Board File 420. Delaware's statistics: 20,380 tons displacement; ten 12-inch guns; speed 21 knots. Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, Vol. 1, p. 194.

building program. On the other hand, it did not warm to the idea of a heavily armored cruiser or battle cruiser. The feeling among the Board members was that Congress would only appropriate so much money for new construction ships, so why propose a type which would compete with the battleship for the dollar and yet not be so effective. The heavy cruiser, called by the General Board an "uncertain battleship," represented a sacrifice in armor and armament for speed, but at a cost which approached and sometimes surpassed the price of the battleship.[119] In addition, the Board's analysis showed that superiority in battleships over a prospective enemy was far more important than a plurality of armored cruisers because of the greater power of the former as compared to the latter. In 1907, Admiral Dewey advised President Roosevelt that "it can be only on very rare occasions that a Commander-in-chief would not prefer to add another battleship to his fleet in preference to an armored cruiser;" and he went on to say that the Board believed "it would be unwise to build any vessels of a type between battleships of large displacement and fast unarmored scouts."[120]

There were a few minor exceptions to this attitude: between 1900 and 1903 the Board recommended the construction of a few

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119. Richard Wainwright, "The General Board," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 48 (February, 1922) p. 197; R.H. Robinson, "Battle Cruisers," lecture delivered at the Naval War College, July 12, 1912, Naval War College Archives, Newport, R.I.

120. Dewey to Roosevelt, January 15, 1907, General Board File 420-8.

armored cruisers; and in 1911 and 1912 it suggested the "desirability" of building one or two battle cruisers, but only as supplements to the regular battleship construction, and based on the shallow reasoning that it might be wise to emulate the other naval powers who were constructing some of this class vessel. However, faced with a continuing shortage of battleships, and a reluctant Congress, the Board evidently decided not to divert attention from the larger vessels, for it dropped all mention of the battle cruiser in its 1913 and 1914 programs.[121]

The cruiser function which most attracted the attention of the Board planners was its ability to seek out the enemy and report his movements. They considered that the scout cruiser was the perfect platform for this mission and, from 1903 to 1914 the Board recommended the construction of 38 of these ships in the proportion of one for each battleship. The results of the fleet maneuvers in 1902 and 1903 seemed to confirm the importance of of this class,[122] but more significant to the Board was the experience of the Russo-Japanese War which showed that "the collection of information ... [was] of prime importance to success, and only second to actual fighting strength."[123] Despite the Board's consistent support for the scout cruiser, the Secretary of the Navy approved only about one-half of

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121. Dewey to Secnav, May 25, 1911 and September 25, 1912, General Board File 420-2.
122. Dewey to Secnav, September 21, 1903, General Board File 420-2.
123. Dewey to Secnav, October 2, 1906, General Board File 420-2.

the number thought to be requisite; Congress was even less generous appropriating for only three in 1903 and none after that year.[124]

The primary function of the destroyer in the early 1900's was to protect the battleship from torpedo boat attacks. It was for this reason that the ship was originally called "torpedo boat destroyer." From 1900 until 1907 the Board expressed the view that there should be one destroyer for every battleship built. In 1907 this ratio was increased to 4:1. The principal reason for the change was the rather remarkable development of the automobile torpedo. By 1907 the range of this weapon was increased to 4,000 yards and the prospects were for even greater improvement. This meant that during night time attacks a torpedo boat could fire at a battleship at a distance beyond the capability of the latter's searchlight. During the daylight hours gun defense could be used, but with the development of the Dreadnought and the removal of the intermediate batteries, this was not as affective as it formerly was. The Board therefore felt that it would be prudent to provide the protection via an advanced screen of destroyers which would be able to ward off raids by the incoming torpedo boats. The mathematics of this screening was such that one destroyer per battleship would not be sufficient; the Board settled on four per heavy ship as a more acceptable proportion. The Board's reasoning also seemed to be confirmed by the building policies of the

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124. Badger to Secnav, April 2, 1920, General Board File 420.

two nations who had most recently waged sea warfare: Russia and an. Russia had added 33 destroyers to her fleet since the conflict and Japan was building at a 5:1 ratio.[125]

The General Board was somewhat more successful with getting its destroyer program approved than it had been with the scout cruisers. The Board had proposed the construction of 133, the Secretary approved 67 of these, and the Congress appropriated for 52.[126]

The least glamorous and yet in some respects the most important classes of ships were the auxiliaries. They were designed to provide sea-based logistic support to the men-of-war in the form of ammunition, fuel, repair, general supply, medical care and, in the case of transports, to lift marine combat forces to the war zone. As with the cruisers and destroyers, the Board determined that the numbers of these ships should be a function of battleship strength. There were some variations in the optimum ratios because of changes in the capabilities of the combatant ships. For example, as the distilling capacity of vessels increased, the need for water ships diminished and gradually disappeared.[127]

The auxiliary which most occupied the Board's attention was the collier or fuel oil vessel. After all, fuel was the only critical item of supply which was consumed en route to the battle zone; if there

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125. Dewey to Secnav, December 20, 1907, General Board File 420-2.
126. Badger to Secnav, April 2, 1920, General Board File 420.
127. Dewey to Secnav, September 28, 1910, General Board File

was no adequate system to replenish the bunkers, the fleet would not be able to engage the enemy in an advanced condition of readiness. This was the situation in 1905 when Dewey told the Secretary of the Navy that there were no colliers "suitable for accompanying the fleet and keeping it supplied with coal."[128] The Navy's weakness in this respect was underscored during the cruise of the battleship fleet around the world from 1907 to 1909. To the everlasting embarrassment of American naval officers, foreign ships had to be chartered and pre-positioned in order to fuel the fleet.[129]

Rear Admiral Charles S. Sperry, who commanded the fleet, wrote:

> not the least significant lesson of the cruise was that colliers chartered under foreign flags failed to deliver 27,000 tons of coal as ordered in New Zealand and Australia and if we cannot have a suitable commercial marine of our own, then the government should own sufficient colliers.[130]

The Congress recognized the problem for they authorized five colliers in the appropriation bill for fiscal year 1909.[131] To the General Board this was nowhere near sufficient; in 1910 it estimated that to take a fleet of 20 battleships, and an appropriate number of cruisers

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128. Dewey to Secnav, September 11, 1905, General Board File 420.
129. Rear Admiral Robley D. Evans, "Admiral Evans' Own Story of the American Navy," Hamptons Broadway Magazine, Vol. 21 (October, 1908), p. 46.
130. Sperry, unpublished mss. on the cruise of the battleship fleet, Sperry Papers.
131. Badger to Secnav, April 2, 1920, General Board File 420.

and destroyers to the Philippines via the Cape of Good Hope, would require 150,000 tons of coal and 16 colliers.[132]

Because it felt that Congress was non-responsive to the critical need for auxiliaries, the Board looked elsewhere for solutions. Its war plans for the Far East required the Asiatic Fleet Commander to keep current lists of ships which might be available for purchase in the event of hostilities.[133] In 1905 the Board endorsed a plan which would have granted subsidies to the U.S. Merchant Marine in exchange for advance agreements that certain of the ships would be designated as naval auxiliaries in time of war.[134] In 1914 the Board reported to Secretary Josephus Daniels that:

> logistic studies in connection with the recent development of the Orange [Japan] and Black [Germany] War plans show conclusively that the question of auxiliaries is of paramount importance, and that in view of the well known preparedness of possible enemies through carefully systematized plans for the employment of merchant auxiliaries, the United States will be heavily handicapped at the outset in the sailing of the battle fleet unless similar measures are inaugurated and systematically prosecuted.

The Board went on to propose the following procedure: it would prescribe the number, kind and characteristics of merchant ships needed as auxiliaries; the Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey would, based on its inspection, designate the ships which could meet the

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132. Dewey to Secnav, February 28, 1910, General Board File 420.
133. Dewey to Secnav, February 26, 1903, General Board File 420-5.
134. Dewey to Secnav, November 23, 1905, General Board File

General Board criteria, and list the repairs required to make them suitable for service with the Navy; the Navy Department would select the specific ships and make advance arrangements with the owners for immediate acquisition in the event of an emergency. It would also lay plans to program the work needed on the ships and even specify the Navy Yards at which the work would be performed. The General Board's objective was to have the ships "loaded and ready to sail ... not later than 20 days after a declaration of war with Black; and sooner, if anything, after a declaration of war with Orange." The Board further advised that "this limit cannot be exceeded without a delay in the sailing of the fleet which may jeopardize a campaign."[135] Secretary Daniels approved of the Board's plan in June of 1915.[136]

The response of the Navy Department and Congress to the General Board's construction program for auxiliaries was poor: of the 50 ships requested, the Secretary approved of 26, and the Congress authorized 17.[137]

The newest weapons of war with which the General Board had to deal were the submarine and the airplane. The Board's policy with respect to these instruments was in marked contrast to its attitude toward the more conventional tools. While it was very progressive in the area relating to surface ships, it adopted a conservative

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135. Dewey to Secnav, August 3, 1914, General Board File 442.
136. Bryon McCandless to General Board, June 9, 1915, General Board File 442.
137. Badger to Secnav, April 2, 1920, General Board File 420.

stance vis à vis the other two dimensions of naval warfare: subsurface & air. As late as 1914, one senior member of the General Board remarked:

> from the limitations imposed by natural laws submarines and aircraft are and must ever remain weapons of limited action ... and their operations must be confined to comparative narrow limits about their own coasts and bases. Within those limits they are formidable; but beyond them comparatively useless.[138]

It is understandable that the older members of the Board looked with disdain on the submarine and aircraft; many of them had joined the fleet when its primary motive power was the wind. In addition they were concerned lest the newer vehicles attract too much money from the construction of the very essence of the fleet, the battleship.[139] The younger officers within the Navy and the General Board attempted to counter their elders with an aggressive and enlightened outlook on the capabilities of the new vehicles, and whatever progress was made in the years from 1900 to 1914 was due largely to their efforts.

As late as 1907, the General Board offered the view that the "science of aeronautics has as yet [not] sufficient importance in its relation to naval warfare to render advisable ... the establishment of an Aeronautical Division of the Navy nor the assignment of any officers to duty in connection therewith."[140] By 1910, with the

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138. Rear Admiral W. H. H. Southerland to Secnav, June 17, 1914, General Board File 420.
139. Report of General Board Third Committee, April 22, 1912, General Board File 407.
140. Dewey to Secnav, September 26, 1907. General Board File

advances in aircraft technology, the Board was willing to grant some ential to the airplane, for it suggested that its value "for use in naval warfare should be investigated without delay ...."[141] It went even further in 1912 when it recommended to the Secretary that the tactics of the airplane be developed along with its mechanical improvement. At the time the Board thought that the aircraft could be used in coast defense or as a ship or shore based scout.[142] A year later the Board's Third Committee reported that aircraft had "progressed beyond the experimental stage," and should be recognized as a proven instrument of war. The Committee which was representative of the younger members of the Board, warned that the capability of aircraft would develop to the point that they would challenge the fleet at sea, and predicted that if Germany were to acquire the much-coveted base in the Caribbean, it could transport aircraft there for use against the continental United States.[143] In August of 1913, the full General Board endorsed these findings and advised at a "complete and trained air fleet is necessary adjunct to the Navy for successful operations against any strong Navy possessing such an adjunct." The Board envisioned that the air fleet's mission would include: mining and scouting from ships and shore. The Board also, for the first time, asked Secretary Daniels to ask Congress for the

141. Dewey to Secnav, October 14, 1910, General Board File 449.
142. Dewey to Secnav, June 26, 1912, General Board File 449.
143. Memorandum by General Board Third Committee, August 19, 1913, General Board File 449.

necessary appropriations to finance the development of naval aviation.[144] Daniels approved the General Board's recommendation "in general" and he agreed to take steps to carry out the suggestions "as far as practicable."[145] Congress however was unwilling to authorize appropriations for naval aviation until March of 1915.[146]

The submarine occupied a unique position among the other components of the General Board's building programs. It was, unlike the battleships, cruisers, destroyers, auxiliaries, and aircraft, the object of considerable Congressional generosity. Indeed, the legislators funded for a total of 67 while the General Board asked for only 50. The reason for this munificence lay in the Congressmen's fear of an enemy's attack on the coastal harbors, and the faith which they had in the submarine as a relatively cheap form of defense.

The early attitude of the General Board toward the submarine was that it was a valuable coast defense weapon but severely limited in capability; it did not want to move too quickly toward a large construction program until the ship had been adeuqately tested and evaluated.[147] The Board offered the opinion in 1902 that the eight submarines then under construction were adequate, and until their

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144. Dewey to Secnav, August 30, 1913, General Board File 449.
145. Z. H. Madison to General Board, September 20, 1913, General Board File 449.
146. Navy Yearbook, 1917 and 1918, p. 384.
147. Dewey to Congressman Henry C. Loudenslager, May 19, 1902, Dewey Papers.

designs had been operationally tested, no more should be built.[148] By early 1904, Admiral Dewey was willing to concede that the time had come to accept the submarine as an accomplished, if limited weapon,[149] and in 1905 the General Board forwarded its first request for new submarine construction.[150] In 1906 and 1907 the Congressional appropriations for submarines began to approach almost one-half the cost of a new battleship and far exceeded the funds being granted for destroyers.[151] This prompted the Board to express to the Secretary, "with the greatest emphasis," that

> the submarine, even if developed to the highest degree of which its most enthusiastic admirers believe it to be capable, can never reduce the necessity for a strong line of fighting ships nor take the place of such a line in the scheme of national defense.[152]

While Dewey and the Board held to this view some of the Navy's younger officers like Lieutenant Commander Ridley McLean saw in the submarine the salvation of Subic Bay from the Japanese. In his view

> the easiest, quickest and most practical means as well as the most economical, of keeping the Japanese out of Subic Bay

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148. U.S., Congress, House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Appropriation Bill Subjects, 57th Cong., 2nd sess., House Doc. No. 11, (Washington, 1903), p. 78.
149. Dewey to Congressman Ernest W. Roberts, February 18, 1904, Dewey Papers.
150. Badger to Secnav, April 2, 1920, General Board File 420.
151. Navy Yearbook, 1917 and 1918, p. 247, 261.
152. Dewey to Secnav, February 27, 1907, General Board File 403.

> and Manila Bay would be to send a number of submarines out there as soon as possible. I speak feelingly of this ... and although I know that there are [a] number of people who are opposed to sub-marines it would be a good time to lay aside our prejudice and utilize them for what they are worth.[153]

Lieutenant Commander McLean was assigned to the General Board staff in 1909 to 1911 and began a campaign to persuade his colleagues that their static view of the submarine mission was without justification. He asked that they look at it not solely in the context of short range harbor defense, but as a part of the fleet;[154] and he recommended that the Board propose the construction of 82 of these vessels for distribution throughout areas of U.S. Naval interest.[155] McLean was able to convince the Board to sponsor the building of a large number of submarines; in September of 1912 it advised Secretary Meyer that the Navy should ultimately have 100 of them distributed in the fashion that McLean had suggested.[156] But while it was willing to go along with McLean's quantitative requirements, it did not accept the thesis that the submarine was capable of

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153. Ridley McLean to Sims, December 19, 1907, Sims Papers. McLean could have reinforced his case by referring to Dewey's appeal in 1900 for the building of experimental submarines. In what was undoubtedly an overstatement, Dewey advised the Congressmen that he would not have been able to take Manila Bay if the Spanish had had two submarines there. Dewey's testimony to House Naval Affairs Committee, April 23, 1900. Copy attached to letter Dewey to Congressman Henry C. Loudenslager, May 19, 1902, Dewey Papers.
154. Memorandum on Submarines, July 1, 1911, General Board File 420-5.
155. Ibid.
156. Dewey to Secnav, September 25, 1912, General Board File 420-2.

operating with the fleet. The Board still looked on the submarines as coastal defense weapons, and resisted any trend toward the larger more sophisticated, and expensive boats, because: the state of the art of submarine construction was not capable of producing a "fleet-type submarine;" it feared that the more costly ship would further erode the position of the surface ships; and finally, in order to maximize the large numbers needed for coastal defense, the price per unit would have to be kept low.[157] The Board maintained this position until mid-1914 when it conceded that the submarine had advanced to the stage where it could be considered a "sea-going" unit of the fleet.[158]

A survey of the period from 1900 to 1914 reveals that the Board asked the Navy Department and Congress for a total of 340 fleet vessels (battleships, cruisers, destroyers), auxiliaries (colliers, ammunition ships, tankers, supply ships, hospital ships, transports, repair ships), and submarines. The Navy Department approved and forwarded to Congress requests for 186 ships, and Congress appropriated for 181. This last figure includes 75 submarines, the only class ship which the coast-defense oriented Congress gave more of than were requested. Excluding the submarine category, which was not considered a component of the fleet, the Board found that the Navy Department supported a little over one-half of its program while the

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157. General Board Report, April 22, 1912, General Board File 407.

158. Badger to Secnav, April 2, 1920, General Board File 420.

Congress appropriated for a little over one-third. The spread ween the Navy Department and Congress is rather narrow and is explained by the fact that the Secretaries forwarded to Congress only those building programs which they felt had a reasonable chance of success.[159]

The Board did not fare much better in its quest for fleet balance. Based on the number of battleships in the fleet, or to be added as a result of congressional appropriations, and counting ships built, building or authorized, the Navy in 1914 was short 125 vessels of the types needed to complement the battleship. This figure comprised: 19 scout cruisers, 80 destroyers, 5 colliers and oilers, 3 repair ships, 4 supply ships, 4 transports, 5 ammunition ships, and 5 hospital ships.

The plans which the General Board first laid in 1903 for a massive, well-balanced fleet which would provide "crushing superiority" over the "menacing" Germans failed in almost every particular. In 1914, the American fleet was far from massive. In fact, the authoritative Naval Annual ranked the United States fourth in modern battleships, fourth in cruisers, and fifth in destroyers.[160] It was far from being well-balanced as the figures in the previous paragraph indicate, and it did not provide equality with the German

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159. Badger to Secnav, April 2, 1920, General Board File 420; General Board Minutes, October 26, 1904, Vol. 2, p. 54; General Board Minutes, May 12, 1909, Vol. 3, pp. 331-332.
160. Viscount Hythe, ed., The Naval Annual 1914, (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1914), pp. 76-82.

naval forces, much less a "crushing superiority." But what the General Board failed to do in peace, Congress accomplished under the threat of involvement in the war in Europe. By passing the Naval Act of 1916, the legislators took a great leap forward, bridged the gaps of the past, and embarked on a new course calling for a navy not just second to England, but second to none.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DISPOSITION OF THE FLEET

Perhaps the most significant contribution of the General Board to American naval policy during the period from 1900 to 1914 was to foster and nurture the concept of the "fleet in being." When the General Board came into existence in 1900, the Navy had ships but no fleet; it was hardly more than the sum of its parts. Its sea-going forces were split up into five stations: Asiatic, Pacific, North Atlantic, South Atlantic, and European.[1] This system unified the ships in the geographic sense, but not tactically for they seldom operated together. Although the North Atlantic Station had, as part of its primary mission, multi-ship training, its commander, Rear Admiral Norman H. Farquhar, advised Secretary of the Navy John D. Long that he was unable to conduct "squadron drills and evolutions," during the year he had been in command, "owing to the necessity for the presence of the vessels on detached duty. . . ."[2] Similarly, the Commander of the Pacific Station found that he could exercise his ships in company for

1. U.S., Navy Department, Annual Reports for the Year 1900, (Washington, 1900), pp. 1-6.
2. Ibid., p. 551.

only a few weeks of the year.[3] Of course the problem was not a new one; as early as 1895, Assistant Secretary of the Navy William McAdoo told the officers at the Naval War College that it was

> painful to contemplate how many officers in command of ships have finished the cruising time allotted to them under the present rules and customs of the navy without even once having sailed in company or manoeuvered for one day with the other ships of our Navy.[4]

Apart from the vessels on the Asiatic station, which were engaged in suppressing the Philippine Insurrection and Boxer Rebellion, the naval operations in 1900 were designed to "show the flag" at home and wherever it was needed to be shown abroad. Training of groups of ships was a subsidiary requirement. Secretary Long considered the major function of the forces on the South Atlantic station to be the promotion of commercial interests along the eastern coast of South America. Even those vessels in home waters along the North Atlantic coast were utilized in large part to show the American people how modern a navy it possessed.[5] While this may have been an admirable purpose, the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, who had the responsibility under Secretary Long for the movement of the ships,

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3. U.S., Navy Department, Annual Reports for the Year 1900, (Washington, 1900), pp. 553-555.
4. Opening Address delivered by William McAdoo at the Naval War College, June 4, 1895, Naval War College Archives, Newport, R.I.
5. Navy Department, Annual Reports for the Year 1900, p. 6.

complained that the requirement to have them attend "local celebra-ons" was seriously interfering with their training.[6]

The character of the naval operations was reflected in the capability of the ships. Captain Bowman McCalla who commanded the protected cruiser Newark in the Far East called the forces on the Asiatic Station in 1900 and 1901 "most inefficient" and "easy victim to any Naval Force ... except that of Turkey, Spain, Portugal and China."[7] Gunnery efficiency, which had shown the need for great improvement during the Spanish-American War[8] was very poor and contrasted unfavorably with the British fleet, and more importantly with the most probable foe, the German Navy.[9] There was no uniform system of battle tactics, and whenever the infrequent occasion arose for multi-ship evolutions, the senior officer would have to improvise with the result that the drills were of little or no benefit to the ships. In fact, American naval forces were in such a low state of readiness that Rear Admiral Henry C. Taylor called a Naval War

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6. Rear Admiral Arent S. Crowinshield to Secretary of the Navy (hereafter cited as Secnav), October 1, 1900, published in Navy Department, Annual Reports for the Year 1900, p. 448.
7. Captain Bowman H. McCalla to Lieutenant Commander William S. Sims, Sims Papers, Office of Naval History, Washington, D. C.
8. Of the 9500 projectiles fired by U.S. ships during the Battle of Santiago de Cuba, only 123 or 1.3% hit Spanish vessels at an average range of 2800 yards. Philip R. Alger, "Errors of Gunfire at Sea," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 24 (December, 1900), pp. 575-592.
9. Secnav to Commander-in-chief, U. S. Naval Force, Asiatic Station, January 24, 1902, General Board File 434-5.

College estimate assigning them the capability to successfully defend German attack in the Nantucket area, a "fairy tale."[10]

Despite the evident inefficiency, many of the senior officers charged with the training of the forces afloat took little corrective action. For them, "maneuvers and target practice were things to get over with as soon as possible."[11] Most of the sea-going Admirals had little interest in prosecuting an aggressive program of training, and limited experience in organizing and directing the operations of several vessels as a unit. Besides, their short tenure of one year or less, together with the fact that for the great majority of them a fleet command would be their last tour of duty before retirement, didn't contribute to an aggressive attitude toward preparedness. Rear Admiral Taylor on the other hand was motivated by the principle that "a fleet is a movable thing; and as action is its vital essence, so inaction, continued too long, is its death." He urged his fellow naval officers to

> abandon the shallow reasoning used to convince ourselves that it is better to lie at anchor than to be underway; better to save the boiler; not wear out the engines; nor overstrain the guns and waste the ammunition. We must remember how

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10. Notes by Henry C. Taylor on the "Solution to the Problem of 1900," Naval War College Records, Federal Records Center, Mechanicsburg, Pa., Box 45.
11. Yates Stirling, Sea Duty, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1939), p. 94.

much our love of ease influences our judgement in these questions, and how easily we find reasons for doing what is comfortable and pleasing.[12]

What Taylor and the other members of the General Board wanted to do was to make the Navy a more credible force - one which hopefully would deter Germany from an attack, or at the very least make it apparent to that nation that the American Navy was something not to be taken lightly. They wanted to exorcise from their brother officers and from the Navy as a whole, "the fallacy ... that war is a very remote contingency." "An awakening must take place in the service," the Board declared, "and we must feel and act, as do England, France, Germany and Russia, as if war might be declared tomorrow. Only thus can the Navy be kept ready to worthily sustain, both in peace and war, the honorable traditions of the Republic."[13]

The first action of the General Board toward the objective of sculpting a fleet out of a conglomerate of individual vessels was to persuade Secretary Long to direct the North Atlantic Squadron to conduct summer maneuvers in 1901. The Board explained to Long that one of the most important aspects of its war planning function was to take steps to ensure that the seagoing forces could execute the plans in the event war came. Since the war plans at that time envisioned a

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12. Rear Admiral Henry C. Taylor, "The Fleet," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 4 (December, 1903), p. 802.
13. Admiral George Dewey to Secnav, December 19, 1901, General Board File 434-5.

German attack in the Nantucket area, it was only logical for the Board ... suggest that maneuvers take place there.[14] The results of the two month exercises were a source of satisfaction to Admiral George Dewey, and he expressed delight that the waters of Nantucket Sound, which were of great strategic significance, were "navigated by a battle fleet for the first time... ."[15] In similar fashion, the Board sponsored maneuvers in the Asiatic Fleet in 1902,[16] and again in the North Atlantic command in the winter and summer of 1902.[17]

Although Dewey and Taylor were satisfied with the progress that had been made, they wanted to go further. In January of 1902 the Board began laying plans for extended exercises in the Caribbean which would bring together, not just the vessels of one station, but all of the naval forces in the North Atlantic, South Atlantic, and Europe.[18] The idea was a revolutionary one. Heretofore all of the naval vessels in the Atlantic were distributed into three fixed areas, each commanded by a flag officer who received his orders direct from Washington. The only event which formerly would fuse them together was mobilization

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14. Dewey to Secnav, March 22, 1901, General Board File 434-1.
15. Dewey to Secnav, August 22, 1901, General Board File 434-1.
16. Dewey to Secnav, December 19, 1901, General Board File 434-5.
17. Rear Admiral Arent S. Crowinshield, Senior Member of General Board present, to Secnav, January 23, 1902, General Board File 434-2,
18. Crowinshield to Secnav, January 23, 1902, General Board File 434-2.

for war, and then because the ships had never trained together under a c .mon commander, their efficiency as a unified force would be low. With the objective of increasing the Navy's preparedness for war, Admiral Taylor thought it advisable to practice mobilization in peace time and get naval officers to think of the Atlantic area as a whole and not one divided into three isolated compartments.[19] Interest in the exercises was widespread; Secretary of the Navy William Moody called them a test of the Navy's "ability to meet war demands," and he directed all offices of the Department to lend their unqualified support.[20] President Theodore Roosevelt was enthusiastic, and in order to add to the event's prestige, persuaded Admiral Dewey to take personal command of the forces.[21]

The maneuvers took place between November 15, 1902 and January 6, 1903 and were separated into two phases: phase one consisted of a search problem, and phase two a mobilization of all forces at Culebra, Puerto Rico for exercises in fleet tactics and gunnery. The search problem required the "friendly forces", represented by the ships of the North Atlantic Station, to detect and destroy the "enemy" consisting of the vessels usually assigned to the South Atlantic and European Stations. The target for the presumed enemy was Culebra

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19. Taylor, "The Fleet," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 29 (December, 1903), p. 805.
20. Secnav to All Bureaus and offices of the Navy Department, and the Naval Stations Concerned, July 24, 1902, General Board File 434-4.
21. Roosevelt to Dewey, June 14, 1902, Dewey Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

or any of several ports on the southern coast of Puerto Rico. The objective of the North Atlantic Squadron was to prevent the seizure of the ports, preferably by advance detection of the oncoming raiders.[22] The results proved to be not very encouraging. The assumed enemy, which could have been, in accordance with the current thinking of the General Board, Germany, achieved their objective with discomforting ease and seized the port of Mayaguez without opposition. The lesson was clear: there was need for vast improvement in the areas of scouting tactics, communications, and general strategic sense.[23]

The operations during the second phase were somewhat more satisfying to Dewey, Taylor and the other members of the General Board, not because the exercises - which were after all very rudimentary in nature - were performed with commendable excellence, but because the presence of 54 Navy ships seemed to infect all hands with a great sense of purpose and enthusiasm. Commander Nathan Sargent, a member of the General Board wrote:

> the work of the Fleet off Culebra marks a new era in our naval progress. The mere fact of mobilisation alone upon so large a scale would have been a good exercise; but to mobilise at an advanced base 1500 miles from home, and to have there not only the fleet but all of its adjuncts, including the torpedo

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22. Secnav to Commander-in-chief U. S. Naval Forces North Atlantic Station, July 22, 1902, General Board File 434-3; Secnav to Commander-in-chief U. S. Forces South Atlantic Station, July 22, 1902, General Board File 434-3.
23. Captain William Swift, General Board First Committee, Notes on Search Problems, February 25, 1903, General Board File 434-3.

> flotilla, colliers, coal lighters, tugs, supply vessels, tenders, ... is something beyond any peace exercise ever attempted in any service.[24]

Admiral Taylor wrote Secretary of the Navy William H. Moody and told him "how widespread and deep is the effect of this concentration of squadrons upon the zeal of the officers and their whole tone of thought."[25] While the psychological benefits described above were of value, the mobilization had more important significance. It illustrated that the navy was far from ready. The philosophy which guided the fleet's disposition and operation had to undergo a drastic change if it was to become an effective instrument of war; the fleet had to be much more than the sum of its parts; it had to be organized in peace as it would fight in war; the showing of the flag had to become secondary to the training of the fleet as a unit. As Admiral Taylor expressed it:

> peace cruising must yield as well as the old tradition of exhibiting our ships to foreign nations. The times have changed. Instant readiness for war has become indispensable, and all other questions must bow before it.[26]

As a direct result of the General Board maneuvers of 1902-1903, American naval forces underwent a fundamental reorganization. The

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24. Memoranda entry in Commander Nathan Sargent's Diary of 1903, Sargent Papers, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
25. Taylor to Moody, William H. Moody Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
26. Taylor to Dewey, January 15, 1903, General Board File 434-4.

past practice of scattering battleships throughout the world was changed and instead they were concentrated into two fleets, the North Atlantic and Asiatic, with 70 per cent of the strength in the former and 30 per cent in the latter. The other stations - Pacific, European, and South Atlantic - remained but at considerably reduced strength.[27]

Although a full discussion of the Venezuelan "crisis" of 1902-1903 is beyond the scope of this study, it might be well to point out the General Board view of the relationship between the Anglo-German blockade of Venezuela and the American fleet mobilization. It does not appear that the maneuvers were planned or executed as a counter-move to the Anglo-German intervention; nor is there any evidence in the General Board Files to indicate that Dewey was advised by Washington that his forces might be called on to intervene as indicated by President Theodore Roosevelt's now famous letter to William R. Thayer of August 1916.[28] If Dewey had received such a directive it would have probably been issued sometime between December 8 to 20, 1902.[29] Fleet drills were cancelled on December 18 "on account of uncertainty regarding Venezuelan matters," but this action

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27. Navy Department, Annual Reports, 1903, pp. 465-478, 649.
28. In this letter, Roosevelt told how he issued an ultimatum to Germany and alerted Dewey's fleet for action. Roosevelt to William R. Thayer, August 21, 1916, Roosevelt Papers, Library of Congress. About the same time Dewey also claimed that he had orders from Washington "to hold the fleet in hand and be ready to move at a moments notice." Dewey to Henry A. Wise Wood, May 23, 1916, Dewey Papers.
29. Howard K. Beale, Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1956), pp. 416, 419.

seemed to be prompted by Dewey's own sense of concern that things m' ht get out of hand rather than any specific orders from Washington.[30] On December 10 Dewey did direct the ships anchored outside Great Harbor, Culebra to be ready "to move ships at slow speed on short notice," however this was undoubtedly motivated solely by a desire to protect the unexposed ships from the onset of sudden winds which might cause them to drag anchor.[31] These two instances were the only occasions that the fleet departed from its standard, exercise-oriented routine. Even the scheduled dispersal of ships to various ports for holiday leave and liberty went as scheduled.

While it is apparent that there were no directives or plans to intervene, there was widespread conviction among members of the General Board that the presence of the American fleet in the Caribbean acted as a restraining force on the Germans, and that they would have gone much further than they did had it not been for the numerically superior U. S. fleet. In this connection, Admiral Taylor told Secretary Moody that it was a "singular accident that all these things should come about just as we achieve this very powerful concentration in this corner of the 'American Mediterranean'... ."[32] Dewey told his son that he had "no doubt the Venezuela question would have given considerable

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30. Sargent's Diary, December 18, 1902, Sargent Papers.
31. Fleet General Order No. 6, December 10, 1902, General Board File 434-4.
32. Taylor to Moody, December 14, 1902, Moody Papers.

trouble had it not been for this splendid fleet on the spot."[33]

ommander Nathan Sargent recorded in his diary that it was

> particularly fortuitous that just as the powers made their demonstration upon Venezuela we should have so large and imposing a naval force in hand in the Caribbean. This did much to strengthen our government in its attitude and its communications with the aggressive powers. Our establishment of a battleship squadron ... and our show of force has done much to preserve peace and render our diplomacy effective.[34]

Taylor also told Moody of a letter he had received from President Roosevelt's brother-in-law, Captain William S. Cowles expressing the view that the "presence of the fleet in these waters, concentrated and organized for work, was probably a convenience to the administration in discussing the Venezuelan situation." Taylor commented that he was "pleased that this was so, although the concentration was not suggested with any reason but that of perfecting the fleet."[35]

Up to this time the principal motivation of homogenizing the fleet was training for war, but in the summer of 1903, the Naval War College conducted a study which indicated that the concentration of battleship forces was strategically necessary; in fact, the conclusion was reached that even the division into two fleets was unwise and all battleships should be concentrated in the Atlantic. The War College argued that until the Panama Canal was completed, the only feasible

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33. Dewey to son George, January 4, 1903, Dewey Papers, Office of Naval History, Washington, D. C.
34. Memoranda entry in Sargent's Diary of 1903, Sargent Papers.
35. Taylor to Moody, December 25, 1902, Moody Papers.

wartime route for the U.S. fleet between the Atlantic and Pacific was around Cape Horn. This meant that Germany, with U.S. forces split between the two oceans, held "an inner line" permitting it to strike in either direction with a superior fleet. If, on the other hand, major U.S. forces were concentrated in one ocean they would approximate in size the German fleet and thus deter an attack, or be in a position to repel one if it were launched. Since the threat was foremost in the Atlantic it was there that the American naval forces should be concentrated. The War College concluded that:

> habitual concentration is Blue's [United States'] only safeguard unless the battle fleet is at least one and one-half times the strength of Black's [Germany's]. It is particularly noticeable that such concentration is the policy of Black and of all other great powers except Great Britain, which maintains a small battleship squadron in the East. Now, in the fall of 1903, the actual state of things is as follows: Black's battleship fleet is concentrated in home waters; 30% of Blue's battleships in commission are in Asiatic waters. The Blue concentrated battle fleet should include all the battleships, all the armored cruisers, except one detailed as flagship of the Asiatic Station, cruisers able to make not less than 17 knots, destroyers, colliers, ammunition and supply ships.[36]

Captain Charles S. Sperry was President of the Naval War College at the time this opinion was offered, and he undoubtedly influenced it. Actually, it was in keeping with a view Sperry expressed in July of 1901 to the effect that the major concern was a German attack in the Atlantic area and the distribution of forces should be made accordingly.

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36. U.S. Naval War College, "Solution, Problem of 1903," Part II, Naval War College Records, Federal Records Center, Mechanicsburg, Pa., Box 45.

At the time he felt that the General Board was paying too much heed to t. situation in the Far East and recommending the allocation of excessive forces to that area of the world.[37] Sperry's views differed sharply from those held by the majority of his colleagues on the General Board. They believed that concentration was essential for strategic reasons and for tactical training, but were unwilling to go as far as Sperry and the War College. They felt that to opt for total concentration in the Atlantic would be tantamount to an abandonment of U. S. responsibilities in the Far East, and with it would come an abrupt decline in U. S. trade. In October of 1901, Dewey advised Secretary Long that the "growing interest" of the United States "in the East will probably necessitate the keeping of a large naval force in those waters."[38] Commander Nathan Sargent felt that the defense of the Philippines, protection of American commerce, and support of the Open Door all demanded a substantial fleet in the Far East. Blind adherence to the doctrine of concentration would, in his opinion, result in the loss of Oriental trade and "raise a hue and cry from San Francisco to Boston."[39] Rear Admiral Henry C. Taylor was

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37. Charles S. Sperry to wife, July 30, 1901, Sperry Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
38. Dewey to Secnav, September 26, 1901, General Board File 405.
39. Memorandum on The Disposition of Our Naval Forces, by Commander Nathan Sargent, undated but circa 1902, Dewey Papers.

convinced that total concentration in the Atlantic would be a grave mistake and would be in a effect a signal to the world that the United States was retreating from the Philippines and its other interests in the Far East.[40]

The conflict of opinion together with the growing Russo-Japanese tensions in the Far East prompted Secretary Moody to ask the General Board for a reappraisal of the current distribution policy.[41] The Board considered the question for a full two weeks, and Admiral Dewey took the unprecedented step of participating in the discussions with the Executive Committee.[42] Sperry presented the War College view, and Rear Admiral Taylor emphasized the favorable impact which the current battleship apportionment had on "trade, political, and international relations." He added that he was influenced in his opinion by a recent conversation that he had had with Mr. Brooks Adams.[43]

Although Admiral Taylor didn't say so at this meeting there was another incident of recent occurrence which had considerable impact. As the debate over concentration was going on in the Board offices, President Roosevelt ordered the Commander-in-chief of the Asiatic

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40. Taylor to Stephen B. Luce, Luce Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
41. Moody to Dewey, November 20, 1903, General Board File 420-1.
42. General Board Minutes, November 20 - December 4, 1903, Vol. 1, pp. 365-374.
43. General Board Minutes, December 4, 1903, Vol. 1, p. 374.

Fleet to sail immediately with his three battleships and four cruisers for Honolulu. This action served to strip the Asiatic waters of all the effective American sea power, but it did not apparently have any connection with the situation in the Far East, or the discussions within the Board. As Rear Admiral Taylor explained it:

> when the Panama question was hot, there was reason to believe that Chile might want to take a hand, and we figured our small force on the Pacific side of the Isthmus as much inferior to what Chile could send there. For this reason the President and Mr. Moody decided to send the Asiatic force as far as Honolulu, hoping that this show of strength would prevent any demonstration from Chile... .[44]

Although the ships soon returned to their normal employment in the Far East, the effect of their departure on the Japanese was pronounced. Admiral Taylor received a visit from a representative of the Japanese Legation in Washington which he described to Admiral Dewey in the following words:

> I had no sooner arrived in my office from the General Board than a representative of the Japanese Legation, Mr. Stevens, appeared showing me a cable (this is quite confidential) from the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Japanese Minister here asking that inquiry be made why, at this juncture, our battleships should be ordered away from the coast of Asia. Mr. Stevens said that the Japanese Minister was much disturbed and that the presence of our battleships, although it was known that we would take no part in any conflict, was of the greatest weight in influencing negotiations between Japan and Russia.[45]

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44. Taylor to Luce, December 9, 1903, Luce Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
45. Taylor to Dewey, December 2, 1903, Dewey Papers.

To Taylor, the Japanese reaction proved the soundness of his views on the distribution of battleships, and indicated that their disposition should not only take into consideration training and strategic concentration, but political conditions as well.

The final Board decision represented a compromise; on the one hand it declared that "the proper military policy, taken as a general principle, ... is the concentration of all the battleships in the Atlantic"; on the other hand it recognized that

> under present conditions, viz., the imminence of war between Russia and Japan, the presence of a battle squadron in the East is necessary; and so long as the very unsettled condition shall continue in the East, the detail of not less than three battleships in the Pacific is advisable.[46]

Two days later Admiral Taylor received a letter from Rear Admiral Alfred T. Mahan, in response to a request by Taylor for his opinion on the advisability of withdrawing the battleship fleet from the Far East. Mahan wrote:

> In considering possible wars with the great nations of the world, it seems to me inconceivable that any one of them should expect seriously to modify, or weaken, our position in this hemisphere. Naval success of a moment there might be; but our position, numbers, and wealth, ... must forbid to any European state the hope of permanent assertion against us on this side of the Atlantic. Great Britain has abandoned the idea; who better than she could maintain it?

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46. Dewey to Secnav, December 5, 1903, General Board File 420-1.

> In the East -- and that means all the Pacific -- the case is very different. All of them have there interests and aspirations common to them and us; and are, some more, some less, in a position to maintain them. Concerning that field, ... much remains to be determined. Further, and as a military consideration more important, all of them have in the Pacific exposed remote interests, against which we can take the offensive, always the desirable attitude. The danger of those positions will constrain the action of each several country -- I forbear names.
>
> To remove our fleet -- battle fleet -- from the Pacific would be a declaration of a policy and a confession of weakness. It would mean a reversion to a policy narrowly American, and essentially defensive, which is militarily vicious. .... How direct the fleet? Should not the answer be -- At some enemy's interest? We cannot so do towards Europe; and, save Great Britain or France, no European state can towards the Carribbean, for want of coal stations; but both they and we can attack in the Far East.
>
> In brief, the American question, the Monroe principle, though not formally accepted, is as nearly established as is given to international questions to be. The Pacific and Eastern is not in that case, and is the great coming question, as far as one can easily foresee.[47]

While the General Board did not, in its estimate of the threat, go to the extent which Mahan did in discounting the importance of the Atlantic area, his strong views on the Far East were undoubtedly used by the Board and Taylor as reserve ammunition to reinforce their convictions. Secretary Moody endorsed the Board's recommendations of December 5, 1903 and the 70-30 battleship distribution policy remained in effect until August of 1906.

In the intervening period the Board had several discussions about the possibility of expanding the Asiatic Fleet but they were not

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47. Rear Admiral Alfred T. Mahan to Taylor, December 7, 1903, General Board File 420-1.

incorporated into any formal proposals to the Secretary. In December of 1904, the Board's First Committee expressed the hope that, when the Navy had 20 battleships in commission, (this would occur in mid-1907), 12 would be stationed in the Atlantic, and 8 in the Pacific. The squadron in the Pacific would be distributed into two divisions of four ships each which would range throughout the Pacific area and join together once each year for maneuvers.[48] Their function would be "to impress foreign nations with the power of the United States to protect its interests, and, at the same time, carry on the exercises necessary for efficiency."[49] In January of 1905 the Board took up a request from the Asiatic Fleet commander for one additional battleship so that he would have a total of four.[50] Some members thought that any such expansion was a political matter and should be left up to the President and the Secretary of the Navy. Finally, the Board decided not to take any action on the request probably because President Roosevelt had already rejected the notion of augmenting the fleet in the Far East.[51]

By August of 1906 many of the conditions which indicated the presence of battleships in Asian waters had changed: the menacing

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48. General Board Minutes, December 20, 1904, Vol. 2, p. 81.
49. Ibid., p. 80.
50. Rear Admiral Yates Stirling to Secnav, August 10, 1904, General Board File 420-1.
51. General Board Minutes, January 24, 1905, Vol. 2, pp. 114-115; Roosevelt to Moody, February 13, 1904, Elting E. Morison, ed., The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, Vol. 4, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 729; hereafter cited as Roosevelt Letters.

Russians had been dealt a crushing defeat by the Japanese; Prime inister Katsura Taro had assured Secretary of War Taft that Japan harbored no aggressive designs on the Philippines; the upsurge of Chinese nationalism over the exclusion of coolie immigrants had subsided by the spring of 1906. With an atmosphere of detente in the Pacific, naval war planners once again turned their full attention to Germany. The war game played at the Naval War College in the summer and fall of 1905 seemed to confirm the wisdom of concentrating the battle fleet in the Atlantic, particularly since Germany had completed four battleships in 1904 and 1905 while the United States was adding only two to its forces.[52] In any event, and without apparent consultations with the General Board or President Roosevelt, the Navy Department decided in the summer of 1906 to withdraw all battleships from Asiatic waters, and by September they were on their way.[53] The departure met with President Roosevelt's approval. Indeed, without knowing of the Navy's plans, and concerned over the incidents in the Pribilof Islands which led to the killing of Japanese sea poachers, he suggested to Secretary of the Navy Charles J. Bonaparte that it might be advisable to remove the battleships in case trouble developed.[54]

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52. Naval War College, "Solution to the Problem of 1905," Naval War College Records, Federal Records Center, Mechanicsburg, Pa., Box 46, Part 3, p. 29.
53. William R. Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958), p. 188.
54. Roosevelt to Bonaparte, August 10, 1906, Morison, ed., Roosevelt Letters, Vol. 5, p. 353.

By this time Roosevelt had thoroughly digested the lessons of the Russo-Japanese War. To him, one of the most significant was the effect of the Russian Navy's strategic disposition on the outcome of the war. When the conflict began, her naval forces were divided between European waters and the Pacific. This permitted Admiral Togo of the Japanese Navy to overwhelm first the Pacific detachment, then, when Admiral Rodjestvensky sailed for the Pacific with his Baltic fleet, Togo met and defeated him in the Battle of Tsushima in May of 1905. The Russian experience made a profound impression on President Roosevelt, and he was determined to profit from it. In January of 1907, Admiral Mahan, upset by a newspaper story that the President was planning to send four battleships to the Pacific, warned him against dividing the fleet. Roosevelt replied with a denial of the rumor, an assurance that he was not capable of such an "act of utter folly," and an explanation that this was precisely why the battleships were withdrawn from Asia.[55] A few years later, on his final day in office, he left his successor, William Howard Taft, "one closing legacy:

> Under no circumstances divide the battleship fleet between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans prior to the finishing of the Panama Canal... . There were various factors which brought about Russia's defeat; but most important by all odds was her having divided her fleet between the Baltic and the Pacific... .[56]

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55. Roosevelt to Mahan, January 12, 1907, Morison, ed., Roosevelt Letters, Vol 5, pp. 550-551.
56. Roosevelt to Taft, March 3, 1909, Morison, ed., Roosevelt Letters, Vol. 6, p. 1543.

While events in the far-off Pribilof Islands did not disturb the amicable relations between the United States and Japan, the decision of the San Francisco School Board in October of 1906 to segregate Japanese students created an air of tension and provoked a fundamental re-examination of American strategic priorities, and particularly the disposition of the fleet. Serious naval planning did not begin until early 1907, principally because Board members were not possessed with any sense of urgency in the early stages of the crisis.[57] In the event of war, and recognizing that the U.S. naval forces then in the Orient were completely outmatched by the Japanese, the Board estimated that the Japanese naval strategists would divide their fleet into three parts; the strongest would attack the Philippines, a raiding squadron would destroy base facilities in Guam and Hawaii, and a small number of vessels would be left in the home waters to protect the coast. Japan was permitted the luxury of dividing her fleet because the United States had not done so with hers; and she would have a completely free hand for about three months until a force superior to hers could arrive from the Atlantic. To some within the General Board the policy of concentration in the Atlantic meant the abandonment of the Philippines and other interests in the Far East, and condemned the United States to a policy of inaction until the cumbersome move could be made from the Atlantic to the Pacific. To

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57. Chapter V, p. 160.

avoid this they proposed an immediate increase in the Asiatic Fleet, including the dispatch of enough battleships to defend Subic Bay until the remainder of the Atlantic Fleet could arrive. This action would also defend Hawaii and Guam since the Japanese would be reluctant to divide their force in the face of increased American strength. Of course it might also deter the Japanese from attacking at all.[58] Dewey could hardly go on record as advocating this proposal in the face of Roosevelt's intransigeance with respect to concentration. Instead, he strongly recommended that the fleet remain in the Atlantic and, if necessity so dictated, that it proceed en masse to the Pacific. In Dewey's view, a splitting of the fleet would be heresy not only in the light of the Russian experience, but also because any attempt to rejoin a divided fleet when war threatened would be interpreted by the potential enemy as tantamount to a declaration of war, and would therefore hamper diplomatic efforts aimed at forestalling the fighting. He rejected the notion that retention of the battleships in the Atlantic meant surrender in the Pacific; on the contrary, with the ships together, command of the sea would be assured and, if the Japanese had control before their arrival, they would soon be able to wrest it from her. Concentration in the Pacific was specifically rejected because

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58. Unofficial General Board memorandum, January 28, 1907, Naval War College Records, Federal Records Center, Case No. 47, FRC locator 303472. This was a working paper used at war planning conference at the Army War College and was probably prepared in the General Board's First Committee.

there was no fortified base in the Far East from which to operate, and the Pacific coast navy yards were not capable of rendering adequate support to so large a force. It was also pointed out that if concentration in the Atlantic was the policy adopted by the major European powers who also had interests in Asia, why should it not also apply to the United States. Dewey hedged his recommendations in two particulars: "political considerations" might dictate a "temporary departure," but when the conditions ceased to exist the fleet should be reassembled; further, there would come a time before the completion of the Panama Canal when the fleet could be safely divided. This point would be reached when the Navy had 30 battleships, (at the current rate of growth, this would be in 1911) and when the facilities on the West Coast and at Subic had been "sufficiently developed and protected to make them real bases. . . ."[59]

The prospects for war appeared to diminish after President Roosevelt extracted a promise from the San Francisco School Board to rescind their offensive order, but the optimism soon faded. The San Francisco riots in May 1907, and the vigorous reaction of the Japanese press convinced many of the Navy's war planners that their theories might be put to a test. The Naval War College, for the first time, ranked Japan ahead of the perennial favorite, Germany, on its list of probable enemies. The officers at the Summer Conference of

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59. Dewey to Secnav, April 25, 1907, General Board File 420-1.

1907 did not think that the Japanese leaders really wanted war. Their ultimate objective was thought to be the conquest of China. Besides Japan's financial condition was none too secure. On the other hand, the recent agreements which Japan had made with Russia and France, coupled with the long-standing Anglo-Japanese Alliance, gave her considerable freedom of action in Asia. These factors together with the pressure of public opinion in the country could force them to use war as a solution to the "serious race antagonism."[60] Admiral Dewey and his colleagues on the General Board were also registering a state of alarm. They advised the Secretary of the Navy of the importance of maintaining a degree of secrecy at Subic Bay to guard against possible espionage. The Japanese in the island were singled out as likely infiltrators, and it was hypothecated that they might attempt to disguise themselves as natives. In response, Secretary Victor H. Metcalf sent cablegrams of warning to the appropriate U.S. naval authorities which communicated the Board's plea for watchfulness.[61] Captain Sargent also felt a new sense of urgency. He told his fellow Board members that

> making all due allowance for exaggeration in current reports, it cannot be doubted that the present attitude of the Japanese agitators is such as to render possible international complications which may result in war. Our recollections need go back but a very few years to recall the period precedent to our

60. Naval War College, "Solution to the Problem of 1907," Naval War College Records, Federal Records Center, Mechanicsburg, Pa., Box 47, p. 101.
61. Dewey to Secnav, June 17, 1907. General Board File 405.

war with Spain, and to remind us to what extent a country ordinarily as imperturbable and conservative as our own can be aroused and provoked into a warlike spirit by the efforts of a yellow press and its belligerent proselytes. If such was then the case with us, how much more may it be now with a bellicose people whose heads are already turned by successful war waged against an incapable enemy, and whose feelings are being worked upon by adroit politicians with subtle arguments on questions of race antipathy and alleged details of persecution of their compatriots. These may be but adroit measures to annoy the existing government on the part of the opposition leaders, but should their provocations result in a change of ministry the matter might suddenly assume grave proportions.[62]

Sargent also challenged the theory of concentration, stating it was valid when the number of capital ships was small but that now with 22 battleships and 10 armored cruisers available or nearly completed

it would seem that not only is it unnecessary to maintain so large a force in the Atlantic, but that our duty to the Pacific Coast should not be neglected now that we are in a position to satisfy its just demands. With a squadron of battleships and armored cruisers in those waters all danger of any raiding attack upon Hawaii or upon the mainland would be averted, for even such enterprising enemies as the Japanese would not venture so far from home unless they considered themselves immune from attack upon their convoys of supplies and free to coal without molestation. Without such a force an attack might readily be anticipated, for the size of the Japanese fleet is such that one portion of it could be sent to capture the Philippines while another could make a demonstration upon our coast in order to divert our movements and to prevent the despatch of any force to relieve those islands. It may be urged by some that a naval force of this size cannot be maintained upon the Pacific coast owing to the lack of repair facilities, but with the commercial resources of Seattle, Tacoma and San Francisco added to those of our Yards at Bremerton and Mare Island and the drydock and machine shops of Esquimalt, which could be used for the smaller vessels in time of peace, there should be

62. General Board Minutes, June 15, 1907, Vol. 3, pp. 107-108.

> little difficulty in effecting such repairs as would be needed. ...
>
> It is not suggested that a casus belli be given to Japan by the immediate despatch of a large force to the Pacific, but ought not the contingency of sending this force be considered, as also the time and manner of so transferring it from one side of our continent to the other that the susceptibilities of the Japanese may not be injured.

Sargent went on to say that he was well aware of the importance of fleet concentration but suggested that it

> may have become subject to some degree of modification and that with our gain in naval strength and with our interests in separate oceans so far apart as practically to require separate forces for their protection, the concentration of the whole at a distance of 11,000 miles from a threatened point may not be a logical application of strategical principles.[63]

Sargent did not specify the exact number of ships he would send to the Pacific. He did refer to "a squadron of battleships and armored cruisers" which, in accordance with the terminology then current, could have been anywhere from eight to sixteen ships. The Board's war plans, developed in January of 1907, and predicated on war with Japan, called for the dispatch of sixteen battleships to the Pacific, i.e. all then assigned to the Atlantic Fleet.[64]

The Board did not act immediately on Sargent's request; but two days after it was offered it adopted the following resolution: "Resolved: That it is the opinion of the General Board that, at as early a date as practicable, not less than sixteen (16) battleships be

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63. General Board Minutes, June 15, 1907, Vol. 3, pp. 107-111.
64. Ibid.

assembled in the Pacific." The Board then directed Rear Admiral Willard H. Brownson "to communicate the foregoing resolution verbally to the Secretary of the Navy, in order that greater secrecy might be preserved in relation thereto."[65] Metcalf so advised President Roosevelt, and on the following day the Joint Board concurred with the General Board proposal.[66] The resolution put forward by the General Board fulfilled both the need for concentration and the necessity to have some show of force in the troubled Pacific. That it did not conform to Sargent's plan for a smaller force, is probably due to the unfavorable reaction which such a proposal would have on the concentration conscious Roosevelt; in addition, a voyage of lesser number of vessels would not provide the opportunity for a full dress rehearsal of the Board's war plans.

The undertaking was a large one and there was some reason to wonder about the outcome. The most recent precedent for a cruise of such distance, for so many ships, was the voyage of the Special Service Squadron in September of 1893 consisting of two battleships, five colliers and two supply ships. Although all of the vessels had received overhauls just before their departure, the journey was plagued by all manner of engineering breakdowns.[67] The anticipated

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65. General Board Minutes, June 17, 1907, Vol. 3, p. 114.
66. Dewey to Taft, June 18, 1907, cited in Thomas A. Bailey, Theodore Roosevelt and the Japanese-American Crises, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1934), p. 216.
67. Rear Admiral Albert S. Barker to Dewey, July 31, 1907, General Board File 420-1. Dewey asked Barker for his experiences on that cruise because of the upcoming voyage of the battleship fleet.

difficulty was one motivating factor in Roosevelt's decision to send the ships. He told Senator Henry Cabot Lodge

> it became evident to me, from talking with the naval authorities, that in the event of war they would have a good deal to find out in the way of sending the fleet to the Pacific. Now, the one thing that I won't run the risk of is to experiment for the first time in a matter of vital importance in time of war. Accordingly I concluded that it was imperative that we should send the fleet on what would practically be a practice voyage. I do not intend to keep it in the Pacific for any length of time; but I want all failures, blunders, and shortcomings to be made apparent in time of peace and not in time of war.[68]

Despite the claim of Roosevelt that it was he who authored the idea of the world cruise, and notwithstanding the probability that he had been thinking of it ever since the disastrous voyage of Admiral Rodjestvensky from the Baltic to the Pacific, it is clear that the Board resolution of June 17, 1907 was the act which gave rise to his decision.[69]

In July of 1907 Rear Admiral Henry N. Manney, on special duty with the Bureau of Equipment, wrote the President and advised him that the dispatch of the battleship fleet to the Pacific would be a "military mistake." Manney reasoned that the campaign which Japan would wage against the United States would depend on her finances, and these were very limited. In Manney's fantastic scenario, Japan would not undertake costly expeditions to capture the Philippines or

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68. Roosevelt to Lodge, July 10, 1907, Morison, ed., Roosevelt Letters, Vol. 5, p. 709. The "naval authorities" to which Roosevelt makes reference were members of the General Board. Roosevelt to Root, July 13, 1907, Ibid., p. 717.
69. Robert A. Hart, The Great White Fleet, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1965); Brownson to Dewey, October 6

the Hawaiian Islands, but she would, with unarmored vessels, seize bases in southern Alaska from which to harass the Pacific Coast. The Japanese battle fleet would in turn be deployed to the Atlantic, and there it would capture appropriate advance bases such as Nantucket Island, and wreak havoc along the entire length of the coast. Meanwhile, the U. S. fleet would have concentrated in the Pacific and, on hearing of the activities of the Japanese fleet, return to the Atlantic, but in such wretched condition after the long cruise that it would be no match for the Japanese. Manney concluded that "while our fleet may protect only one coast, prudence would indicate that the more valuable and vulnerable" should be protected and unquestionably this is the Atlantic.[70]

Roosevelt did not really take Manney very seriously[71] but decided to solicit the General Board's views on his estimate.[72] The Board replied that the only common ground between it and Admiral Manney was that "Japan shall shape her policy with a view to the

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70. Rear Admiral Henry N. Manney to President Roosevelt, July 19, 1907, General Board File 420-1.
71. He wrote his naval officer brother-in-law, Captain William S. Cowles: "Is Admiral Manney a lunatic? He has sent me some thoughts on the Japanese and our fleet going to the Pacific which really would do discredit to an outpatient of Bedlam." Roosevelt to Cowles, July 24, 1907, Morison, ed., Roosevelt Letters, Vol. 5, p. 726.
72. Roosevelt to Acting Secnav Truman H. Newberry, July 24, 1907, Ibid., p. 725.

utmost economy of expenditure;" otherwise it was in total disagreement with his estimate. The Board was convinced that the Philippines would be Japan's first target, it ruled out any attempt at operations along the Atlantic coast, and it strongly defended its decision to deploy the battleships to the Pacific. The Board concluded with a plea destined to be misunderstood by Roosevelt:

> our interests in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans are each such as to require protection by a battle fleet, and, the distance between these oceans being so great as to preclude the possibility of a single fleet giving adequate protection to both, the military interests of the United States require that we should possess two fleets, one in each ocean, each fleet capable of caring for interests in the region which it is charged to protect.[73]

Roosevelt interpreted the Board's statement, quoted above, as favoring a departure from the sacred principle, "Concentration," and while "heartily" approving of all else put forth by the Board he was convinced:

> if any one lesson is taught by the Russo-Japanese war, and indeed by naval history generally, it is that in the effort to protect even two important points a division of force may mean the failure to protect either and the final loss of the war. Before the war with Japan the Russian naval authorities took precisely the view now taken by the General Board, namely: that their interests in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans were such as to require protection by two battle fleets, one in each ocean, each capable of caring for the interests in the region

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73. Rear Admiral John P. Merrell, Senior Member Present General Board to Acting Secnav, August 2, 1907, General Board File 420-1, July 19, 1907.

which it was charged to protect. In consequence the Russians were obliged to wait until the Japanese had destroyed their Pacific battle fleet, and then to see them destroy the Atlantic battle fleet when it got out there. I do not intend to run the slightest risk of any such disaster. ... I want our fleet to be a unit. If there is a war we must run the risk of raids on the Atlantic coast and accept the inevitable howl that will come, merely using such monitors and torpedo vessels as are available, together with any unarmored cruisers, to try to protect the Atlantic coast.

When our fleet goes to the Pacific I want every battleship and armored cruiser that can be sent to go. So far from its being a war measure to send our fleet there, I regard it as really a peace measure. It will show other nations what we can do and it will let us ourselves tell what we can do and what the shortcomings that must be remedied are. My idea is probably merely to send the fleet around the world. But in any event, I will not leave in one ocean a considerable fragment of the fleet, not enough to greatly weaken by its absence the remainder of the fleet. This seems to me elemental.[74]

Roosevelt's sharp words obviously stung the Board members for they felt, with considerable justification, that the President had misconstrued the paragraph in question. It had been the Board's intention to

emphasize the inadequacy of the present fleet to meet the demands upon it, and to indicate the direction towards which our building program should tend. So far as the disposition of the existing forces is concerned, the Board's views coincide precisely with those expressed by the President... . The General Board has no thought of departing from the principle of fleet concentration, which it originally proposed and has since consistently advocated -- at times against weighty opposition.[75]

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74. Roosevelt to Newberry quoted in Newberry to Rear Admiral J. P. Merrell, August 8, 1907, General Board File 420-1, July 19, 1907.

75. Merrell to Secnav, August 15, 1907, General Board File 420-1, July 19, 1907.

By late September and early October 1907, the fears that the United States and Japan would go to war began to subside, and in December of the same year, the Atlantic fleet began the first leg of a voyage which would eventually span the globe. Despite the decreasing tensions there were demands, notably from Army men, that the fleet be retained in the Pacific until all danger was past. They did not feel that they could defend American interests without a powerful battle fleet.[76] These concerns apparently prompted the General Board to take a somewhat more flexible stand on concentration. In February of 1908, it declared that the fleet should be stationed in the "region where the greatest danger exists." Just where this would be was not, in the Board's view, a question which naval officers should decide, but it depended on the "country's international relations" and the decision of the "Administration."[77] The Joint Board in its advice to President Roosevelt was a bit more explicit. It suggested that the battle fleet should remain in the Pacific until the "threatening complications" had ceased to exist. The Joint Board counsel caused Roosevelt to wonder whether this might not be a good idea, but on hearing that the Navy Department had deep doubts that it could support the ships with the sparse facilities

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76. Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909, p. 225.

77. General Board memorandum for the guidance of the naval members of the Joint Board, February 18, 1908, General Board File 420-1.

available on the West Coast, and elsewhere throughout the Pacific, he cided that they should return to the Atlantic on the completion of their tour.[78]

There was at least one officer in the General Board who disagreed with the President's decision. Captain Sydney Staunton of the Board's First Committee, arguing that it was imprudent to make the principle of concentration so "dogmatic," suggested that the 16 battleships and 6 armored cruisers be kept in the Pacific and the remaining 9 battleships and 4 armored cruisers be constituted as part of the Atlantic fleet. He recognized the logistic limitations in the Pacific, but thought that a decision to keep a large fleet there would accelerate the build-up of the bases. The principle motivating factor in Staunton's plan was

> the strategic protection which it would afford to the Naval Station at Olongapo [Subic Bay]. The army states that it cannot defend Olongapo from a land attack during the period necessary to bring a fleet from the Atlantic coast. But a fleet in the Pacific, ready to move at once to the Philippines, would probably prevent any attempt to transfer a Japanese army over sea.

Staunton must have found some support for his proposal for he went to the trouble of preparing a smooth copy of a memorandum embodying his ideas for Admiral Dewey's signature.[79] It was never sent and the

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78. Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909, p. 226.
79. General Board Memorandum, June 23, 1908, General Board File 420-1.

battle fleet began its return voyage on December 1, 1908. Dewey's eluctance to forward Staunton's suggestions was probably due to the awareness that they completely contradicted Roosevelt's ideas on concentration and the Navy Department's statement that the fleet could not be supported on the West Coast. Ironically, Roosevelt, like the General Board, saw Japan as a greater menace to U.S. interests than Germany but contrary to the thinking within the Board he did not want to split-up the fighting ships.[80]

The General Board was not particularly impressed by the demarche in U.S.-Japanese relationships which occured in the last half of 1908, and which was marked by the warm reception of the American fleet and the exchange of notes between Messrs. Root and Takahira. In February of 1909, less than two weeks before Roosevelt left office, the Board forwarded a letter to Secretary of the Navy Truman H. Newberry recommending that the Staunton plan become naval policy. This was the two-ocean standard to which the Board referred in its letter of April of 1907 with one significant difference: the Navy had only 25 battleships completed, and not the 30 required by the earlier position.[81] Roosevelt may have gotten wind of the revolt, for just a few days earlier he told his Cabinet that

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80. Roosevelt to Philander Knox, February 8, 1908, Morison, ed., Roosevelt Letters, Vol. 6, pp. 1510-1514.
81. Dewey to Secnav, February 24, 1909, General Board File 420-1.

while there was any chance of difficulty with Japan he would resist n es to divide the fleet and would insist on its retention in the Atlantic.[82]

Any hope that Dewey and his officers had that a change of administration would prove more malleable in this regard proved illusory, but the General Board would not yield easily on this issue. Through the forum of the Joint Board, President Taft was advised that

> the time... is now approaching when because of the increased size of the battle ship fleet it may be divided and a part of it stationed in the Pacific. Such a fleet, more powerful than that of any possible enemy in the Pacific, and based on the Pacific yards and on the new naval station which is being developed at Pearl Harbor, would control the Pacific and provide a strategic defense against the invasion of the Philippines by land.

It went on to imply that unless a more powerful force was stationed in the Pacific, Japan would be tempted to invade the Philippines and it would unquestionably fall into her hands.[83] This proved to be the last formal attempt by the General Board to persuade its superiors on the subject of the division of the fleet. There were later moves by Captain Sydney Staunton and Commander Clarence S. Williams, both Board members, looking to the division of the fleet, but they were never officially adopted. The latter's views were particularly strong.

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82. M. A. DeWolfe Howe, George von Lengerke Meyer, (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1920), p. 419, citing Mr. Meyer's diary of February 19, 1909.
83. Report of the Joint Board, November 8, 1909, General Board File 405.

He maintained that the "present plan of keeping all of our battleships in the Atlantic is illogical and dangerous," and would, in the event of war with Japan, give "her a tremendous initial advantage." Williams observed that war with Japan was more likely than with Germany, for even if the latter's navy engaged in a successful war against the United States, she would "in all probability emerge from the struggle in such condition as to be helpless against Great Britain."[84]

The final act in the long debate over the disposition of the fleet came in November of 1910. All thirty-nine of the officers attending the Summer Conference at the Naval War College voted unanimously that the battle fleet should be concentrated in the Pacific Ocean, and that portions of it return regularly to the Atlantic for major overhaul. These officers did not expect trouble from Germany but as they remarked:

> granting for the moment, what is not believed to be true, that Germany is so inclined; could Germany afford to gratify that inclination? The mere declaration of war would in large measure cause a cessation of German trans-Atlantic trade and would inflict grievous injury upon the German mercantile marine; the German Navy... would be rendered for the time powerless against that of Great Britain. Like two bar magnets of equal strength placed side by side with poles reversed, each with all its force clinging fast to the other and the two thus joined together forming one single mass incapable of serious disturbing influence exterior to that mass; so to-day, firmly locked together, appear the British and German fleets. It is

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84. Memorandum by Commander C. S. Williams, March 16, 1910, General Board File 420-1.

> believed that neither country would do us harm if it could, and it is also believed that neither country could do us vital harm if it would. ... But even if we should lose places of such priceless value as Culebra, Porto Rico, Guantanamo, the Isthmus, which as yet are without local defences, still, they are not so far away from us and we could take them back in time.

With respect to the Pacific area, these same officers observed:

> if in that ocean we lose our undefended positions, which are positions of such peculiar and extreme potential value, it might prove impossible ever to get them back again, because so far away from the center of power. The longer our action should be deferred, the more hopeless it would or might become. Moreover, conflicts of sentiment and interest, race questions and trade rivalries, appear much more likely arise in the Pacific than elsewhere.[85]

The General Board was asked by Secretary of the Navy Meyer to comment on the War College conclusions. The Board knew full well that they contradicted completely his policy on the distribution of the fleet and were also aware, from its own attempts, that his position was less than flexible. The Board decided to reject the War College suggestions and to support Meyer fully. It did not think that war was probable and, while it agreed that Germany and Japan were the most likely adversaries, it was not sure in what order they should be ranked. However, based on the fact that Germany would be the

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85. Naval War College, Committee reports on questions submitted to the Conference, Naval War College Records, Federal Records Center, Mechanicsburg, Pa., Box 48.

"more formidable" foe, and recognizing that the East Coast could provide cheaper and higher quality logistic support to the fleet, it recommended that the battle force be positioned in the Atlantic. The Board did admit that this would make it "impossible to prevent Japan from seizing Luzon, and Guam, and perhaps rading Pearl Harbor," but eventually the United States could acquire naval supremacy in the Pacific, "overwhelm the Japanese fleet, isolate Japan from the world, and bring her to terms."[86] Meyer predictably approved the Board's views and at the same time curtly told the President of the Naval War College that in future conferences "involving important policies of the Department, the different views be sought and sent to the General Board." Meyer added that he did "not desire a vote or conclusion ... on these important policies, or any publicity."[87]

This quieted the War College, and its later classes studiously avoided discussing the subject of concentration. But it did not deter the irrepressible Captain Staunton of the General Board. He raised the question once again in April of 1912, arguing that there was not "one chance in a thousand" that Germany would initiate hostilities against the United States. Nor did he believe that war with Japan was probable, although there was danger that the race issue in California

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86. Dewey to Secnav, November 17, 1910.
87. Meyer to President Naval War College, November 17, 1910, General Board File 420-1.

might precipitate a conflict. Staunton felt that the United States ıld, under the circumstances, safely send 12 of the older battleships to the Pacific to act as a deterrent to the Japanese and ease the fears of the residents living on the West Coast.[88] Staunton's views were challenged by another member of the General Board, Commander William D. MacDougall. He was not as sanguine as his colleague on Germany's intentions; on the contrary, he felt that any dilution of the Atlantic fleet strength would tempt Germany to attack. In addition, he raised the old issue concerning the inability of the Pacific bases to adequately support a large number of battleships.[89] Dewey settled the matter by noting that Staunton's suggestions were beyond all hope of implementation, and would not therefore, be officially considered.[90]

That the question was not raised again was not solely due to the fact that Meyer remained Secretary through March of 1913, but also because the naval planners began to shift their interests back to the Atlantic area beginning in 1912. In that year the Naval War College once again returned to the premise that Germany was the most probable enemy and its war games for 1912 and 1913 were based on

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88. Memorandum by Staunton, April 16, 1912, General Board File 420-1.
89. Memorandum by Commander William D. MacDougall, May 7, 1912, General Board File 420-1.
90. Memorandum by Dewey, June 26, 1912, General Board File 420-1.

this assumption.[91] In addition, the completion of the Panama Canal was close at hand, and its availability seemed to the General Board, not only to confirm the wisdom of keeping the fleet on the East Coast, but also suggested the advisability of gathering in the Atlantic, "all ships of military value, battleships, cruisers, scouts, destroyers, submarines, and all military and other fleet auxiliaries into one consolidated Home Fleet under one command... ." The Board went on to state that if there was "no particular danger of war threatening in either ocean," small detachments of the Home Fleet could be assigned to "police and diplomatic duties" on the West Coast, and in the event of trouble, they could be easily rejoined to the main fleet through the Panama Canal. The Board thought that, in the absence of the threat of war in the Far East, U.S. interests there could be adequately protected by "vessels of little or no value to the fleet... ."[92]

War was declared in Europe four months after this recommendation was made. Any doubts which still existed within the General Board or at the Naval War College about the wisdom of concentration in the Atlantic must have quickly vanished. There was no longer any need to postulate any theories or play any war games to find out where the greatest danger lay. Germany solved the problem, and answered for the American naval planner the question which seemed to torture him most: Where should the fleet be disposed.?

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91. Naval War College, "Solutions to the Problems of 1912 and 1913," Naval War College Records, Federal Records Center, Mechanicsburg, Pa.
92. Dewey to Secnav, May 13, 1914, General Board File 420.

CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The movement which began at the Naval War College in the late 1880's and early 1890's to formalize the process of war planning in peacetime culminated in the establishment of the General Board of the Navy in March of 1900. For the first time in its long history, the Navy finally had an organization the primary function of which was to consider with whom a war might occur, how it should be fought, and how to best prepare for it. Until that time, the Secretary of the Navy was not short of advisers; if anything, he probably had too many. However - and in retrospect this seems incongruous - he never had a system by which he could receive professional advice on the overall needs of the Navy as they related to the business of preparing for war. In effect, he received profuse counsel on the trees but very little on the forest.

The person most responsible for the creation of the General Board was Rear Admiral Henry Clay Taylor. His study of naval administration, and his contacts with two fellow naval officers, Stephen B. Luce and Alfred Thayer Mahan, convinced him that war planning, as an administrative process, had not received the

attention it so critically deserved. It seemed to him that naval officers, and their civilian superiors, generally assumed that the onset and pace of future wars would give adequate time to prepare for hostilities once they were close at hand. While this approach had the virtue of simplicity, it was fraught with danger and ignored Taylor's assumption that wars of the future would be marked by a sudden beginning, a rapid tempo, and great complexity.

Taylor based this estimate not only on the increasing sophistication of the instruments of naval warfare, but also on Mahan's recently postulated thesis that the traditional roles of navies - coast defense, blockade, and commerce destruction - were things of the past. Instead, future conflicts would pit fleet against fleet, for the ultimate prize, command of the sea. Taylor quickly embraced this theory and concluded that there should be concomitant changes in the field of naval administration which would ensure that the American Navy would be trained and ready to put it into practice should war come.

But even if Taylor had rejected the Mahanite view, and continued to believe that the nature of naval warfare would remain essentially unchanged, he still had a strong case for his argument that the Navy's organization was unsuited to its requirements. The bureau system had already demonstrated in the crucible of war that it was incapable of providing the Secretary with complete counsel and, as a result, had to be supplemented with extemporized boards to coordinate its specialized advice and to provide the Secretary with

strategic plans of action. The fact that these temporary organs proved very useful suggested strongly that they become permanent components of naval administration to function in peacetime as well as in war.

Taylor encountered resistance for his reorganization proposals from three sources: the bureaus, the civilian administrators of the Navy Department, and Congress. The opposition of the bureau chiefs was purely of the self-serving variety. Ignoring the overall needs of the service, they refused to acquiesce in any plan which might erode their rather extensive power and elite status. Congress was on the side of the bureau chiefs, not because it was sensitive to their feelings, but because the pluralistic bureau structure afforded the legislators a high degree of control over naval policy and an influential voice in the proposal and disposal of funds beneficial to their constituents. To them, the bureau-Congress partnership was a useful one and should be maintained. They therefore had no desire to alter an organization which, in addition to providing mutual advantage, had been in existence for over 50 years and had apparently proved itself capable in three major wars. Faced with this disinclination on the part of Congress and the bureau chiefs, the Navy Department civilian administrators saw little advantage in sponsoring Taylor's plans for a general staff. In addition, Taylor's unfortunate selection of Germany's military

administration as a model conjured up the spectre that a general staff would soon make the Secretary nothing more than a puppet and lead to the de-Americanization of the Navy.

The odds were clearly against Taylor, but with remarkable persistence he continued his campaign for seven long years. Finally and quite unexpectedly Secretary Long decided in March of 1900 to establish the General Board. It was a far cry from the organization Taylor had strived for, but it was devoted to the problem of war planning nonetheless. Long's decision was quite out of keeping with his previous expressions on the subject, and it is difficult to assess the principal motivating factor in his action. Certainly one of the foremost was completely divorced from the issues; that was the selection of a position for Admiral Dewey which would be commensurate with his high rank, stature, and public esteem. Indeed, there is some evidence to indicate that the Board would never have been established if Long had not been confronted with this problem. On the other hand, there is reason to conclude that by 1900 he saw merit in Taylor's suggestion that he be given a source of advice shorn of bureau parochialism. Whatever his scale of priorities, he wanted above all else to keep peace in his contentious official family. Accordingly, he assured the wary bureau chiefs that the new organization would have no effect on them, and he warned Taylor that the General Board would be little more than

an experiment. If it became a source of friction, he would not hesitate to order its dissolution.

Although the General Board was supposed to deal with only those enemies thought capable of challenging U.S. security, its history reveals that it had other foes: bureau chiefs and line officer extremists. Board members soon found that their work was being seriously hindered by the intransigence of the first group. Any movement to address problems germane to war planning, but necessarily touching on areas of bureau interest, triggered strenuous protests to the Secretary and raised the fear that the "experiment" might end. Unfortunately, Secretary Long placed a higher premium on familial peace than on unrestrained advice on naval policy, thus encouraging the bureau chiefs to maintain their intractability.

Rear Admiral Taylor made the best of a most unsatisfactory situation, and through his adept management demonstrated that the General Board could perform valuable functions. It had, through its members, staff, and association with the Naval War College, and Office of Naval Intelligence, access to the best minds in the naval service. Unlike the bureaus, it was not tied to any special interest, but thought for the service as a whole. Nor was it burdened by the details of routine administration which would consume the time eeded to solve the large questions involved in planning for war. However, without effective backing at the secretarial level, and without a workable system to implement its recommendations, the

Board found that much of its intellectual energy was deflected and absorbed by an unnecessarily opaque administration.

While the bureaus deserve a considerable share of the blame for this situation, they could not have functioned as freely and disdainfully as they did had they not received encouragement and protection from Congress, and so little real supervision from most of the Secretaries of the Navy. Congressional thinking about the needs of the Navy was unimaginative. It failed to appreciate the fact that the demands inherent in preparing a navy for war were growing in complexity, and therefore required improved management techniques. The actions of the legislators, and specifically their rejection of a roposal in 1904 to "legalize" the General Board, seemed to ignore the widened responsibilities thrust on the Navy as a result of the acquisition of overseas territories. Curiously enough, this was the same Congress which had approved a general staff measure for the Army only the year before. The Army gained where the Navy failed because it had a capable and influential spokesman in Elihu Root, and unlike its sister service, gave a sad performance during the Spanish-American War which vividly suggested the need for extensive reorganization.

While the cooperation of Congress was essential to efficient war planning, much could have been done at the secretarial level, if this position had not been treated for the greater part of the period, as a

way station to other cabinet or governmental positions. Between 1902 and 1909, there were no less than seven Secretaries of the Navy, and while they gave every indication that they were intelligent and capable men, they could hardly make a significant contribution in so short a tenure. More importantly, they were not able to tame the bureaus and make them responsive to the overall requirements of the service. It seems paradoxical that President Theodore Roosevelt, admittedly very interested and expert in naval affairs, permitted this situation to exist. Perhaps he felt so knowledgeable about the Navy that he thought he could exercise the supervision which his cabinet officers were unable to do. Assuming this was so, he would still have found it impossible to maintain the day-to-day control needed to bring together, in some sort of coherent fashion, all of the disparate elements of the Navy Department. Neither could a short term Secretary. As a result, the period was marked by less than effective civilian control, the same circumstance which Long feared would ensue if a general staff were authorized.

The second foe which the General Board encountered was composed of a group of line officers who were dissatisfied with the pace of organizational change within the Navy. While Rear Admiral Taylor was alive, he was able to suppress their extremism. They looked to him for leadership, and endorsed his conviction that until a better organ was found, war planning could be best carried on in the General Board. Taylor's death in 1904 left this line officer

faction almost leaderless. Dewey had great confidence in Taylor, but was unable to relate in the same fashion to the rest of the group. Besides, he did not favor the idea of a general staff and thought the General Board entirely adequate for war planning. Even if he felt differently about the matter, he still would have been reluctant to join in the fight, since it would have required him to associate his illustrious name with a very controversial and unpopular movement.

Frustrated by Dewey's attitude, and lacking Taylor's enlightened leadership, the proponents of a general staff abandoned their distinguished predecessor's "proper and large methods," condemned the General Board, and resorted to chicanery, muckraking, and other forms of extremist tactics. In so doing, they undermined whatever good-will Taylor had cultivated over the years, hardened congressional resistance to any organizational reform, and achieved what the bureau advocates had hoped for - division among the line officers.

The evidence indicates that these officers had little if any appreciation for the problems of military planning in a democratic environment. Indeed, they believed with Mahan that democratic governments disabled efficient defense, and would have welcomed a form of government which would have permitted a more direct and assured link between their proposals and their implementation. As one of them noted, they were looking for a system which would

"automatically prepare" the United States for war.[1] In their eagerness to advance American naval power, they ignored the fact that responsibility for war preparations is not concentrated in one place or person, but is necessarily shared by the Executive, by Congress, and ultimately by the citizens. They exaggerated the importance of a general staff, and seemed to think that having one with wide authority to propose as well as execute naval policy would solve all of the Navy's problems. Even with their general staff they would still have been subject to secretarial supervision and limited by the strictures of congressional appropriations. Some of them even advocated the appointment of a naval officer as Secretary of the Navy. In fact, their entire philosophy suggested that they would not be content with anything short of a militarist form of government.

From 1909 to 1913 Secretary of the Navy George Meyer demonstrated that the Navy's war planning requirements did not necessarily demand the radical solutions proposed by the extremists. Unlike his predecessors, he remained in office sufficiently long to become acquainted with the intricacies of his position and render sound judgements on the merits of various courses of action. He dared do what others would not and drastically curtailed the power of the bureau chiefs without reference to their patrons in Congress.

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1. Lieutenant Commander Ridley McLean to Commander William S. Sims, May 18, 1911, Sims Papers, Office of Naval History, Washington, D. C.

Contrary to the recommendations of the general staff advocates, he also preserved the General Board, but at the same time complemented its advice with a method to implement and monitor its approved programs. Because of Meyer's intelligent and capable leadership, the 1909 to 1913 period deserves recognition as one of the Navy's most efficient eras from the viewpoint of general administration and war planning.

Regrettably, Meyer failed to acquire congressional sanction for his innovations, and his successor was able to restore the bureaus to their former status. As a consequence, the rancor resurfaced and with it came a renewal of the drive for a general staff. An attempt by the reformers to eliminate the General Board as a semi-independent body and to effectively reduce the Secretary to a mere figurehead fortunately failed. Finally, pressed on by the crisis in Europe, Congress elevated war planning in the Navy to bureau status and authorized the formation of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. While this removed the function of war planning from the Board, it did not end its usefulness. Many succeeding secretaries recognized its value as an unbiased source of advice, uncommitted to any of the many cliques within the Navy Department, unburdened by the detail of day to day routine, and thinking for the service as a whole. As a result, the General Board, established as an "experiment" in 1900 continued in existence for a half a century.

In order to carry out its mission as the Navy Department's war planning agency, the General Board had to develop an administrative process which would produce the documents providing general and specific guidance to fleet commanders in the event of war. This system, while crude as measured by present day standards, was a marked improvement over the disorganized and confused efforts of the nineteenth century, and helped transform war planning from a subsidiary endeavor to a major area of Navy Department activity.

The Board's war planning methods were designed to force naval officers to think about future conflicts in concrete terms, to gather the necessary intelligence information, analyze various courses of action, select the most likely, and make the required logistic preparations. Although there were no apparent weaknesses in the Board's concept of war planning, there were several in its execution. Perhaps the major deficiency, produced largely because of the chronic disharmony between the Board and the bureaus, was the lack of adequate logistic support. With the exception of Secretary Meyer's administration, there was little or no real attempt to mesh materiel policy with war plans. The quality of the plans also suffered because of a serious shortage of personnel both within the Board and at the Naval War College. Finally, although the Board wisely tried to get the fleet commanders to share in the war planning process, it found all too frequently that the latter group did not regard the plans with the same degree of importance as did the planners.

The very nature of the war planning function demands that an enemy be found. The Board's search was a brief one. Indeed, before it met for the first time, Germany had been marked in the minds of Board members as the most probable foe, and, with a few exceptions, the prospect of war with her dominated their thinking throughout the 1900 to 1914 period. Among the many factors which prompted this attitude were: the unfavorable impression created by German naval activities in the Far East in the last decade of the nineteenth century; Dewey's experience with Admiral Otto von Diederichs at Manila Bay in 1898; Board members' endorsement of the mercantilist view that colonies were essential to national wealth, and since Germany had not shared to the same degree as other large powers in territorial gains, it seemed natural that she would attempt to redress the balance, probably at the expense of the Monroe Doctrine.

It would be difficult to accurately assess the Board's objectivity with respect to Germany, but it is clear that many of the members and particularly Admiral George Dewey and his close associate Captain Nathan Sargent, possessed a definite anti-German bias which probably colored their analysis of the German "threat." This prejudice undoubtedly prompted the Board to leap to unwarranted conclusions concerning German activities in the Caribbean. Any event, however insignificant, was shaped to fit the <u>à priori</u> pattern of a menacing Germany which would stop at nothing, including war, to achieve her objectives. Adding to the problem of judging German

intentions and capabilities was a distinctly inferior naval attache system which provided the major portion of the Board's intelligence information.

Although the Board insisted that the United States and Germany were destined to go to war, it laid down one pre-condition which made such a prospect very remote. It properly emphasized that Germany would not attack in the Caribbean unless she were assured of immunity from aggression in home waters. The Anglo-German rivalry made this guarantee most unlikely. Still, the Board was not willing to entrust American security to European antagonisms and therefore wanted the deterrence provided by a fleet equal or superior to Germany's.

In the period from 1900 to 1914, the United States had two-ocean responsibilities and only a one-ocean fleet to protect them. This fact plagued the Board planners and forced them to the conclusion that the only rational war strategy for the Pacific was to avoid war altogether. The Board never contemplated the possibility of unilateral action against the Russians over the Open Door policy, but felt that the only feasible course of action, in view of American naval weakness and the preoccupation with the Atlantic, was to join Great Britain and Japan in a mutual effort. This may have been feasible om a military standpoint, but hardly from a political one considering American antipathy towards alliances. When Japan arose as the most likely contender in Asia, it was evident to the Board that

moves on her part against the Philippines or other U.S. possessions in the area. The Board strategy in this eventuality was simply to abandon the Far East, regroup forces in Hawaii, and hopefully recoup the losses.

Defense of territory would appear to be one of the most basic of national responsibilities. Rightly or wrongly, the United States acquired extensive holdings in the Caribbean and Far East in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War. Because of a small standing army, and because these territories were insular in nature and separated from the continent by large expanses of water, it naturally devolved on the Navy to provide for their defense. This in turn required a network of bases to support the complex needs of the modern warships. In addition, the bases had to be relatively independent of the fleet for their protection, otherwise it would not be free to seek and destroy its primary objective - the enemy fleet.

In addressing itself to these needs, the General Board exercised reason and restraint although some within the Navy Department were demanding a large and expansive naval base system. The Board simply wanted to concentrate the effort in accordance with the strategic needs, not only in the overseas territories, but at home as well. Their program was essentially to have a fully developed base the Caribbean, one in the mid-Pacific, one in the Western Pacific, two on the Atlantic Coast, and two on the Pacific Coast.

The principal obstacle to the implementation of the Board's recommendations came from Congress. The legislators were reluctant to spend large sums of money on the overseas bases because they did not directly benefit the local economies. As a consequence, the United States had too many bases within the continental limits and too few overseas, and those in the former category were distributed in such a manner as to restrict the capability of the Pacific Coast to support large numbers of ships for long periods of time.

In retrospect it would have been more in keeping with the national interest if Congress had rejected self-serving proposals to finance relatively useless facilities at places like Port Royal, Kittery, Pensacola, and New Orleans, followed the suggestions of the General Board, and allocated the funds to more critical needs in the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

While it is true that the division between the Army and the Navy over a base in the Philippines resulted in eliminating that island as a site for a large naval facility, it is probable that even if there had been unanimity within the military, the necessary appropriations would not have been granted by Congress. From 1901 to 1908 there was concurrence with regard to Subic and yet its development lagged seriously because of insufficient funds.

The General Board shipbuilding proposals were designed to achieve in a fixed period of time a specific battleship strength supported by a balanced proportion of other type vessels. When its long range program was first suggested in 1903, it was intended that the 48 battleship fleet would give the United States "crushing superiority" over the most likely foe at the time, Germany. It is difficult to understand how the General Board could have logically continued to insist that its goal of 48 had as much validity in 1903 as it did in 1914, when in fact the eight year span had seen the addition of Japan to the list of potential enemies and had been marked by significant changes in the planned size of the German fleet. In fact the Board, while priding itself on the consistency of its 48-battleship plan, changed the criterion on which it was originally based from "crushing superiority" to parity with Germany, without adding Japanese strength to the equation. The Board's program may have been consistent from a numerical standpoint, but far from it with respect to relative power vis à vis Germany and Japan. Of course it would have made little sense for the Board to expand its desired end strength when congressional authorizations were not even coming near the smaller figure.

Board members were understandably frustrated by the lack of receptivity for the idea of a long range program. They believed that naval policy in this respect should have "no relation to party or

parties," and "should not be affected by changes of administration."[2] These views indicated a signal lack of appreciation for the democratic system of government as it exists in the United States. The size of the Navy was a legitimate subject of partisan politics, and like any other aspect of the legislative process, was scrutinized and judged on an annual basis by the Congress. Although three Presidents and seven Secretaries of the Navy had the opportunity to endorse the Board's 48-battleship objective, none did so probably because they understood the futility and inutility of such an effort in the light of the country's budgetary system.

The Board's shipbuilding program failed in other aspects as well. Its annual proposals were generally halved by Congress and, perhaps more significantly, altered to the extent that the desired balance between battleships and other class vessels was never achieved. These behemoths of the sea were surely major indices of naval power, but, as the Board correctly emphasized, it was folly to place too great an emphasis on them to the detriment of other components of the fleet.

Although the General Board found little success in its attempts to acquire a balanced fleet of 48 battleships with an adequate naval base system to support it, it did make major strides toward increasing the preparedness of the vessels which the Navy possessed.

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2. Admiral George Dewey to Secretary of the Navy, March 28, 1913. General Board File 446.

Through the efforts of the General Board, and particularly those of Rear Admiral Taylor, the ships were forged together into fleets, and the traditional practice of independent cruises gave way to the new concept of multi-ship operations. The result was a more responsive and professional Navy, far better equipped to deal with any enemy.

Soon after the fleet concept became accepted practice, a debate began to ensue over the proper disposition of the Navy's warships. Some within the Board, notably Rear Admiral Taylor, felt that the doctrine of concentration espoused by the Naval War College was important, but should not be rigidly applied, and should take into consideration other factors such as U. S. diplomatic interests. To them concentration was more of a tactical principle, applicable in the event of imminent battle, and not always pertinent in a normal peacetime environment. Their thinking was undoubtedly based on the expectation, that in the event war came unexpectedly, a divided fleet could avoid battle until it was brought together and its power maximized.

Taylor's views on the disposition of the fleet predominated until after the Russo-Japanese War. That conflict convinced President Roosevelt that the battleship fleet should never be divided until the completion of the Panama Canal facilitated inter-oceanic communications. Some officers within the Board did not share his opinion but found Admiral Dewey unwilling to challenge what he felt was an

irrevocable decision on the part of the President. These officers thought that a small force of battleships n the Pacific would deter Japanese planners from any adventure, and still not dilute the Atlantic Fleet below a strength which would invite German aggression. Roosevelt's strong stand on fleet concentration not only suppressed any moves toward a more flexible policy during his administration, but during William Howard Taft's tenure as well.

In the absence of an actual conflict it would be hard to judge the relative merits of the different views on the fleet's disposition, but the debate from 1900 to 1914 indicated that the Navy's ship strength and naval base support facilities, were far from adequate in view of the nation's far-flung responsibilities, and most inconsistent with the Board's convictions that American security was endangered by major powers in both the Atlantic and Pacific.

One final observation might be drawn from the history of the General Board from 1900 to 1914, and that relates to the problem of war planning in a democratic environment like the United States. As the Board's experiences illustrate, preparing for war in a peacetime context is in itself a complex venture. Even totalitarian governments with their concentrated system of decision-making must find this so. The process is made tremendously more complicated with the American form of government because it involves so many stages: the large number of military specialists, the civilian

executives, the President, the Congress, and the citizens. It is important that efficiency in this regard be sought not by any sacrifice of the principles inherent in the society, nor in any organizational gimmicks, but through an informed partnership which acts in accordance with the national interest, properly and constitutionally defined.

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George Dewey
Robley D. Evans
William F. Fullam
Albert Gleaves
Stephen B. Luce
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Charles O'Neil
William L. Rodgers
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Joseph C. Strauss
Henry C. Taylor
Richard Wainwright

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